

RUNNYMEDE GAZETTE

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EDITORIAL

ONE ROOKE DOES NOT MAKE A SPRING

Many of us will applaud the gallant efforts of Tony Rooke to bring the BBC to account.

Whilst making, over the years, many angelic claims to 'impartiality' the BBC has never been much more than the propaganda arm of the British Government; nor would its founding father, Lord Reith, have expected otherwise. It was perhaps fortunate happenstance that comparatively early in the Beeb's existence we had to contend with the Second World War, where such a propaganda arm was needed.

The BBC was always very comfortable with the old system of D-Notices. Now it fits nicely into what would seem to be some informal and hidden D-Notice system, the nature of which was never been analysed or exposed to any degree.

Ever since the Reddaway purge of what was then anti Common Market sentiment in the early 1970's the BBC has faithfully promoted the European Project. In recent years it has received 'soft' loans from the European Commission of at least £140 million, presumably in exchange for favourable coverage. An organisation which, we might think, should be foremost in promoting its native culture has vigorously embraced metrication.

Likewise the BBC has become deeply wedded to neo-liberal monetary orthodoxy. I know as a certain fact that senior BBC economic journalists have been present at meetings where money reform featured high on the agenda and that such journalists have had discussions with members of the money reform movement pressing for an alternative view to enter the national debate. But after half a decade of crisis, hardly a peep of this on air.

In refusing to pay his TV license, Tony Rooke accused the BBC of being complicit in terrorism by its coverage of 9/11. In fact a much wider case can be made against the BBC ... complicity in fraud and treason, at the very least.

In all this we might miss another, wholly different, wood for the trees. How many others have either joined, or can be persuaded to join, Tony Rooke's protest?

Do we have a network of local groups, cells or lodges, capable of following his lead and contacting ... even by going door to door ... their neighbours to show solidarity and do likewise? As it is we will be lucky if more than a few score around the country will show resistance.

However gallant individual challenges may be, democratic resistance can only work on the principle that if a hundred people resist, then they have a problem, if a million resist, then government has a problem. Unless we can so organise, we will never prevail. We are still very far from that point.

NOR DOES A 'NEW CHICAGO PLAN'

Two items are devoted to the publication, by the IMF, of a paper on 'A New Chicago Plan', by Benes and Kumhof.

The original Chicago Plan was largely stimulated by the work of Irving Fisher during the 1930's and founded on his two, now largely forgotten works, *Booms and Busts*, and *100% Money*. During the 1920's Fisher had achieved fame and fortune by his promotion of Wall Street. His subsequent work was both a personal atonement for his error, and a cogent analysis of how he had got it so horribly wrong. He concluded that it was not money but debt, and a debt-based currency, which lies at the root of all evil.

Many parts of the Benes and Kumhof paper are highly technical ... certainly not fodder for the non-mathematician ... but the conclusions point towards the only way out of the current morass.

Yet, as with all of this, how are we going to get the message into the media and onto the doorsteps? Are the banksters getting ever more confident that they have bludgeoned us all into accepting endless decline, depression and austerity? The money reform movement must now consider carefully how this paper can be used as a clarion call for change, and having done so must act as one.

Frank Taylor

MPS REVIVE THE CORPSE OF THE 'SECRET JUSTICE' BILL

David Rose; Daily Mail UK; via John Newell

MPs revived the corpse of the 'Secret Justice' Bill. Here we spell out the full terrifying implications of life in... Secret Britain. Vote on Bill took place at same time as gay marriage vote. Bill could give power to cover-up details on events such as Hillsborough. Legal system would be weighted in favour of the powerful

While all attention at Westminster was focused on whether to allow gay marriage, this Coalition Government did something furtive – something that is not only much less liberal, but coldly terrifying.

Under the cover of the furore, it quietly disinterred the corpse of its 'Secret Justice' Bill. This Bill creates extraordinary new legal powers to keep official dealings hidden from us. It changes all the comforting certainties about the rule of law in Britain.

Most of us have some kind of grasp of what is officially called the Justice and Security Bill. But it can be hard to imagine what it would actually mean in practice.

The Government wants us to think its scope is limited to rare and arcane disputes, perhaps born of foreign battlefields. Or ones that sound as if they belong in spy novels, involving CIA 'black ops' and 'dark jails'. But if it becomes law, the effects will be felt much closer to home.

The shocking outcome of the recent Hillsborough Inquiry, bringing justice at last to 97 families? If similar circumstances were to arise again, it is likely that justice would never be delivered: if the families tried to sue, alleging a bungled police operation and a subsequent cover-up, the Bill would give the authorities the ability to keep the truth concealed.

A case brought against the Ministry of Defence by families of soldiers killed in a foreign deployment, alleging their loved ones' equipment was defective? This is not mere hypothesis. Many argue now that the British death toll in Afghanistan has been higher than it should have been because some of our military vehicles were too vulnerable to roadside bombs.

With this law enshrined, the Government could insist on a closed, secret hearing. There, it could present evidence denying such claims. No one could challenge it, because no one directly affected by the case would ever know what it was.

Or take the very real, current scandal of the women green activists who unknowingly entered sexual relationships with undercover police officers.

Those defending such a case could be entitled to a secret hearing, at which they could claim that such tactics were entirely justified, on the basis that the women posed some kind of threat to national security.

This is the reality of a society regulated by secret justice: a legal system weighted irredeemably in favour of those in power. The legislation had previously been watered down considerably, and wisely, by the House of Lords. Now, it is not just as bad as it was when introduced last year. It's even worse.

Under the resuscitated Bill, matters involving State security will usually be heard at secret 'closed material procedure' hearings. They will be attended only by security-vetted 'special advocates'. Those involved in cases against official bodies will be permanently unable to know about the evidence deployed against them.

The new revised draft, the product of the final session of the Bill's committee stage, was forced through by a majority of one. The Ulster Democratic Unionist Ian Paisley Jnr cast the critical vote.

This took place at precisely the same time as the same-sex marriage debate was happening in the main Commons chamber, which is why all this went virtually unnoticed.

The consequences are draconian. The Government's actions, prompted by intense lobbying from MI5 and MI6 security chiefs, mean there is now less than three weeks to stop the enactment of a ruthless measure that amounts to a charter for cover-ups.

A real recent example of a case that will be affected is that of Abdelhakim Belhadj. He is the Libyan opposition leader abducted with his family from Bangkok with the help of British intelligence, then tortured by Gaddafi's brutal regime for years.

Like other victims of 'extraordinary rendition', Mr Belhadj, who has never been alleged to have committed a single hostile act against Britain, its citizens or its allies, is suing the UK Government. But the official evidence of what was done in our name will be deemed far too 'sensitive' to be aired in open court.

Once the Bill becomes law, his chances of success are remote. And the prospects for enforcing the merest whiff of accountability on the agencies responsible for torture cases, and, indeed, a vast range of official activity from national security to the country's 'economic wellbeing', will be just as distant.

Conservative backbencher David Davies said it was 'appalling' that the Government reneged on its promise to allow full judicial discretion. Previously, the Lords had passed two crucial safeguards to stop this. The first said judges could grant the Government a secret hearing only if other alternatives had already been considered, like, for example, asking permission from the judge in a case to withhold sensitive evidence altogether, under the longstanding system of 'public interest

immunity'. The second Lords safeguard was more fundamental.

It stated that judges could allow a secret hearing only after balancing the Government's demand for one against the historic legal principle that justice must always be open.

Last week, with the passage of Amendment 55, moved by the junior Justice Minister James Brokenshire, both these safeguards were swept away. 'In practice, it will now be very difficult for a judge to resist a closed hearing,' one legal analyst said yesterday.

Under this Bill, it is now possible a prisoner in a British jail who tried to challenge his detention in the courts would remain incarcerated without hearing the evidence against him.

The battle is not over. Pending is a High Court action by The Mail on Sunday which seeks to make public a secret judgment issued in an Afghan alleged torture case two years ago, which resulted from an earlier form of secret hearing, now deemed illegal by the Supreme Court.

As this newspaper has pointed out, the Bill will inevitably lead to a body of secret law and secret legal precedents. Our case also asks the court to issue guidelines on how such secret judgments should be reviewed, and whenever possible, published.

Meanwhile both Labour and several influential Tories are determined to try to reinstate the Lords' safeguards when the Bill returns to the full House of Commons later this month.

Andrew Tyrie, the Tory who campaigned for years against torture and rendition, says: 'Not only must all of the Lords' amendments remain in the Bill, they need to be underpinned by further improvements.'

Mr Davis added: 'What the Government did last week is a massive dilution of the protections put in place by the Lords. I can only hope they will summon up the courage to reinstate them.'

It is a hope anyone with even the vaguest interest in open justice would surely share.

THE WAR ON MEDIA FREEDOM: UNDERMINING THE INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE ONLINE MEDIA, EU TO "REGULATE" INTERNET SEARCH ENGINES

By Nathan Allonby; Global Research

A new report written for the European Commission recommends regulation of internet news, modifying search engines to control access to "conspiracy sites", the creation of European government news agencies and the training of new "cadres of professional journalists... for... science, technology, finance or medicine".

The report also urges EU politicians and leaders of EU institutions to give regular news conferences, to emerge from the shadows and take centre stage as the real leaders of Europe. This marks the beginning of a new era for the EU, and for its control of the media. If you are reading this in USA or Canada, be aware that what comes to Europe could also come to North America, due to the Euro-Atlantic Area of Cooperation. This a process of convergence via which Europe and North America will adopt similar policies on "freedom", justice and security, to be implemented by 2014, which appears applicable to the latest media proposals.

The report (A free and pluralistic media to sustain European democracy) was published this month by a High Level Group (HLG), formed by European Commission, which included Latvia's former president and a former German justice minister. The policy behind this report has been under continuous development for some time. The aims described in 2011 included : – the opportunity to "reconquer" press freedom, with specific target countries including Hungary, France, Italy, Romania and Bulgaria; to increase coverage of the European Union, and to regulate the internet and social media such as Twitter and Facebook. The last of these aims has received EU attention since the London riots. (See The press in Europe: Freedom and pluralism at risk | EurActiv)

Some of the key points in the report are listed below: -

The EU claims legal authority (“competence”) to regulate the press and news media.

In this context, the report offers no definition of what constitutes “journalism” and what will be regulated, but instead recommends “debate among all stakeholders on ... guidance to courts”.

A large portion of the report relates to the internet, new media and search engines. Internet search engines are proposed to be included within media regulation.

The report specifically endorses Cass Sunstein’s comments on the internet and extremism. The HLG report says that “Cass Sunstein, for example, raises concerns that the internet will enable people to be less engaged in society, given increasing capabilities for personalised filtering and the decreasing presence of ... newspapers... undoubtedly have a potentially negative impact on democracy... we may come to read and hear what we want, and nothing but what we want. ... The concern is people forgetting that alternatives do exist and hence becoming encapsulated in rigid positions that may hinder consensus-building in society.” The report continues, “Information isolation and fragmentation, together with an inability to check and evaluate sources, can have a damaging impact on democracy”.

To tackle this, search engines are proposed to be included within media regulation. Search engines are highlighted as having a major impact upon content viewed and the prominence in which it is presented: – “the new media environment increases the importance of ‘gate-keepers’, digital intermediaries who are the access route to the internet (for example search engines and social networks) ... For these actors, only the EU has the effective capacity to regulate them”

Sites reproducing articles (“news aggregators” and “digital intermediaries”) could be subject to new restrictions requiring balanced content. The report says that “Digital intermediaries, such as search engines, news aggregators, social networks... should be included in the monitoring of the sector. The increasingly important role they play in either improving or restricting media pluralism should be considered, especially as they start producing content. However, care must be taken to distinguish between media that publish original work directly, and services that allow users to republish or link to other peoples’ work.”

It is proposed that there should be a subsidy supporting responsible journalism, to news media meeting defined criteria – “There should be streamlining and coordination of support and funding for quality journalism”.

The report recommends there should be research fellowships to train investigative journalists – “In order to build up cadres of professional journalists competent to operate in ... investigative journalism, journalistic fellowships should be offered [at] Universities and research centres ... to be funded by the EU. ... The fellowships would be particularly valuable for investigative journalism, or for training journalists to mediate between complex subjects such as science, technology, finance or medicine and the wider public.”

The report recommends that “Media literacy should be taught in schools starting at high-school level. The role media plays in a functioning democracy should be critically assessed as part of national curricula”.

“[T]he HLG notes the founding of the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom in Florence in December 2011, entrusted with generating policy studies and papers” and “the funding of research projects such as MEDIADEM (European media policies: valuing and reclaiming free and independent media in contemporary democratic systems)”

The European fundamental rights agency is unveiled as a major actor in the strategy.

The EU would become a regular presence on the news. It is recommended that “EU political actors have a special responsibility... in triggering European news coverage. The Presidents of the EU institutions should regularly organise interviews with... national media from across the EU.”

It is also recommended that “funding for cross-border European media networks (including such items as translation costs, travel and coordination costs) should be an essential component of European media policy. Support for journalists specialised in cross-border topics should be included in such funding.”

The following observations and comments could be made about the above: -

Many were surprised that Prime Minister David Cameron and the UK government refused to create a new press regulator in response to the Leveson Report. Was the reason because they were already awaiting the European HLG report and a coordinated European action plan? It appears that the British government has been pushing for controls on social media since the summer riots of 2011. The British public has become used to policy laundering, where the British government pushes the EU to introduce unpopular measures, then blames these on someone else.

The proposals to control search engines should be regarded as significant. The proposals would

control access to information, rather than merely the news media alone.

The technology to modify search results is already highly sophisticated, having been refined in China for over a decade. Google recently withdrew anti-censorship functions from its search engine – some allege under pressure from the government of China, which had been reducing access to Google services. Meanwhile Chinese internet controls have greatly increased in sophistication, for example, with the ability to detect and sever connections when Tor, Onion, encryption or Virtual Privacy Networks (VPNs) are in use.

In respect to “consensus-building in society”, although the European HLG report says “It is clearly not possible to force people to consume media they do not wish to”, equally nothing in the report appears to rule out restricting access to certain material or viewpoints.

The European HLG recommendations should be seen in the context of proposals, in both the EU and the UK, to record internet searches and websites visited. The EU Telecommunication Data Retention Directive is currently under review and the European Parliament voted in 2010 for this to be expanded to record all internet searches.

The HLG report is an outline statement of general principles, with the detail yet to come. This report marks the public announcement of a long-term war on media freedom that has been carefully planned in advance, since at least 2011.

This is only the beginning. The funding of the new Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom and of research projects such as MEDIADEM will create an industry to generate new proposals and new regulations.

The EU is set to appear as a regular feature on our news, with the creation of new EU press agencies, media channels, and EU-funded and EU-trained reporters, reporting a new style of “cross-border” European story, featuring the EU and its institutions. EU politicians and leaders of EU institutions are going to be on the news regularly.

It appears the EU is set to emerge from the shadows and take centre-stage in political coverage, as the real policy-making government of Europe.

By interesting contrast, the EU has been moving to reduce internal transparency and access to documents, such as legislation in draft. There will be more seen, but less content.

The proposals for “pluralism” and balance seem likely to significantly affect many internet alternative news sites.

Sites which include a mixture of both “aggregated” news (links from other sites or articles reproduced from other sites) and original content – perhaps the majority of alternative news sites – appear to fall under new proposed controls on balanced coverage.

The mention of courts sounds ominous. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has played a significant role in advancing the scope and powers of the EU, and in effect acts as a major law-making body in its own right.

The report does not mention the significant audience movement away from traditional mainstream news media, such as TV and newspapers, which appears to reflect widespread dissatisfaction with the type of news coverage and content it seeks to advocate.

The proposal to subsidise such news reflects the fact the public just won't buy it. Although unstated, perhaps this is why the report aims to re-educate the public, starting in school.

There is an obvious conflict between genuine pluralism in the media and the aim of “consensus-building in society”. The HLG report is concerned with the latter. Welcome to a new form of “pluralism” – one that is regulated, harmonised and politically-orthodox. Historically, controls on the press have always suppressed criticism of governments, never increased balance.

Mainstream media coverage in general features striking bias – pro-government bias, both in terms of the amount of coverage and prominence, relative to opposing viewpoints.

It would be naive to think that new requirements for balanced coverage would in any way reduce pro-government bias in reporting. For example, do we expect that the report's concern about “people forgetting that alternatives do exist and hence becoming encapsulated in rigid positions” is also intended to call for greater coverage of alternative viewpoints critical of the establishment? Is this likely to mean that mention of the events of 9-11 should in future be balanced by mentioning that a significant proportion of the population disputes the official account? Would reporting on new counter-terrorism security measures be balanced by reporting that the majority of the population does not agree they are justified? Would reporting of the debate in Parliament be balanced by mentioning that certain issues are prohibited from discussion, or that both government and opposition are led by Bilderbergers who hold similar views to each-other and support similar policies?

Even-handed balance is not practiced by the mainstream media – for example, they have not presented the version of events from viewpoint of the Gaddafi government in Libya or Assad in Syria, despite some reasonable justification for this. Reporting in the run-up to the invasions of Afghanistan

and Iraq was not even-handed, with considerable grossly non-factual reporting, such as the fantasies about bin-Laden's caves at Tora-Bora. However, it is not this type of reporting that governments are seeking to change.

The creation of new "cadres of professional journalists... for... science, technology, finance or medicine" suggests these are key areas where European Commission has been unhappy with the presentation or wants to take control of the debate. Think of alternative medicine, GM crops, global warming, nuclear power and the banking crisis, to mention a few. These are fields in which the alternative media has had significant impact.

How should we respond to this?

The main thing is not to be passive – these are still only proposals and have yet to be formally accepted by the European Commission. Now is the time for protest and opposition. Developments in the United Kingdom are worth watching because the UK is believed to be bidding to lead cyber-security and policing in Europe. There is overwhelming public disapproval of internet surveillance proposals – parliamentary consultation on the legislation received 19,000 emails against, 0 in favour. However, although the legislation may have stalled (temporarily), the £ multi-billion investment in the internet surveillance programme has not. It appears the government approach to democracy has reached the stage of "So, how are you going to stop us?" They have realised that the opposition may be vocal, but is also disorganised and has no strategy against implementation without public consent. One factor the government may have overlooked is that the British government internet surveillance strategy requires a public-private partnership and the active cooperation of commercial operators such as search engine providers (e.g. Google) and social networks. Although the government may not be moved by public opinion, it seems extremely likely that commercial organisations would be deeply affected by bad publicity and falling sales. Coordinated consumer pressure could easily provide a major set-back to government plans, and probably set the scene for a complete roll-back – if only opposition could be coordinated. Unfortunately, this aspect of the government analysis is correct – public opposition is disorganised and largely ineffective. This is mainly due to passivity and complacency. As an adjunct to a previous survey of the introduction of ID cards worldwide, the author of this article also read about any opposition to these schemes, nation-by-nation. Although introduction of these schemes was being organised and coordinated globally, opposition was disorganised and rarely organised even at a national level – the globalist side had almost completed its victory before the general public had even woken up. Despite the article being read by hundreds of thousands of people and translated into several different languages, barely a handful of people responded to the invitation to contact the author. This is reflective of the level of passivity which has hampered the organisation of real opposition.

If there is ever going to be any opposition, this is the time to establish contact with others, to get a trans-national opposition off the ground. We have to build real bridges between people – direct, human contact, face-to-face where possible – before the EU begins to monitor, regulate and close access to the internet. At present, it is relatively easy to read and publish articles, to find and link up with people who disagree with the mainstream, globalist agenda – soon, this could be much more difficult, when we can no longer communicate easily.

This is also the time to download and save information from the internet, particularly valuable knowledge about subjects such as alternative medicine, science and the real history of our society. Store it permanently, on disc or better still on paper. Let's make sure they can't take it away from us.

This is the time to establish an alternative internet, which they can't control. Three main strands have been mentioned in articles recently: -

setting up alternative, independent internet networks – via PirateBox , Freedom Box or similar devices

the "Dark Net" or "Deep Web" of hidden webpages not listed by search engines

untraceable email via pseudonymous remailers, such as Mixmaster and Cypherpunk, to beat attempted state mass-surveillance of communications

It is also worth implementing anti-surveillance measures, such as described in this – Techniques For Avoiding Surveillance And The Censor.

We don't know how much time we have – let's not waste it. (You are invited to contact the author.)

EUROGENDFOR - EUROPE'S ARMED MILITARY POLICE - COMING TO A DISTURBANCE NEAR YOU?

Sonja Jay Porter; Freenations; via Stella Masters

The idea of a gendarmerie is as a military force designed for a state to use against its own people, not against foreign aggressors which is a totally alien concept to the British.

The organisation called the EUROGENDFOR, EGF, or more properly the European Gendarmerie Force, should be better known in Britain than it is, for its function is worrying and could affect this country in the future. The Eurogendfor is a combined police and militia force currently formed from six EU member states, designed along the lines of the French Gendarmerie which was established a few years ago to deal rapidly with any perceived threat of increasing civil unrest and to strengthen the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. It was originally set up by the European Union in September 2004 at the suggestion of the then French defence minister, has headquarters in Vicenza north eastern Italy with a core of 800-900 members ready to deploy within 30 days, and an additional 2,300 reinforcements available on standby.

At present, membership of this Gendarmerie Force is only open to EU countries which have a police force with military status and therefore does not include the United Kingdom whose system of policing is by consent and quite different from that which operates on the Continent. Nor does Germany take part as their constitution does not permit the use of military forces for police services. To begin with, the Eurogendfor comprised forces from France, Portugal, The Netherlands, Italy and Spain but Poland and Lithuania became 'partner countries' in 2007 and 2009 respectively and Romania joined as a full member in 2008. In December 2011 Poland applied for full membership. At the moment, the only other EU country which has the relevant police/military ability to join the Eurogendfor is Bulgaria but as and when the EU expands, Serbia, Albania, Georgia, the Ukraine and possibly Turkey could also be accepted as full members. However, there has been a recent suggestion made by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael) that the rules for inclusion might be relaxed, in which case all EU member states, including the UK, might join and, in theory, operate throughout the European Union.

The organisation is managed by its High Level Interdepartmental Committee (CIMIN) that consists of representatives from member states' foreign and defence ministries and which decides on the inclusion of other countries in the Force and also on possible Eurogendfor missions. There is also a Presidency of CIMIN which lasts for one year, circulates around the various member states and for 2013 will be held by the General Commander of the Royal Dutch Marechaussee. The EGF has a motto: *Lex paciferat*, which means "law will bring peace", (STRANGE THAT THEY THEREFORE NEED ARMED MILITARY POLICE! - ED.) and in 2005 a logo for both a flag and uniform badges was decided upon, consisting of a blue shield with central grenade on a vertical sword surrounded by the twelve stars of the EU flag. However, this was changed in 2007 when the stars were removed and the website's address was altered from .eu to .org (<http://www.eurogendfor.org/>).

As Alfredo Vacca, Legal Advisor for the European Gendarmerie Force said in an e-mail to the writer dated 24th October 2012, "Eurogendfor is at the disposal of the EU as well as of other International Organisations such as NATO, UN, OSCE and ad hoc coalitions but is not an EU asset."

Eurogendfor was officially declared operational in 2006 but its status was not finally enshrined in law until 18th October 2007 in the Treaty of Velsen. According to Article 5 of this Treaty, the force may also be placed "at the disposal of...the UN, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), NATO and other international organisations or ad hoc coalitions" for

various missions. Article 4 of the Treaty states that the EGF forces could be placed under either civilian authority or military command to perform security and public order missions, by supervising local police and including criminal investigation work. They could also conduct public surveillance, border policing and general intelligence work. They could also train instructors and police officers to international standards.

Torquil Dick-Erikson, a legal journalist who has lived in Rome for over 40 years and who has specialised in comparative criminal procedure, points out that Article 6.3 of the Treaty of Velsen allows the Eurogendfor to be deployed in another EU state with the simple agreement of that state. Two months after the signing of that Treaty on 18th October 2007, the Lisbon Treaty was signed on 13th December. This contained a "Solidarity Clause" (Article 222) which introduced substantial changes so that the European Gendarmerie Force can now "assist a Member State in its territory, at the request of its political authorities". According to Hansard of 11th December 2007, David Miliband, the then Foreign Minister, was asked to "give an undertaking that [the EGF] will never be allowed to operate on British soil", but as Mr Dick-Erikson says, this undertaking was not given and in fact Mr Miliband confirmed that the force could do so, with the mere "consent" of the government.

Another worrying sign, pointed out by journalist Jason Groves writing in the Sunday Express a month before the signing of the Treaty of Velsen, was that the gendarmerie-type force had been in operation even before the Treaty had been signed. According to the Statewatch Analysis by Tim Schumacher already referenced, in 1998 during the military intervention in Bosnia, a similar force had been organised under NATO's Stabilisation Force (SFOR) to fill the gap between the military and police and which had the powers to make arrests, to use firearms and to control civil unrest. This was followed in 1999 when a similar unit was sent to Kosovo under KFOR but here the force was also given "preventative and repressive resources for the suppression of unrest". In 2000, seven years before the signing of the Treaty of Velsen, Statewatch points out that the European Council and all 27 EU States extended their "non-military crisis management" to include up to 5,800 officers in a Police Rapid Reaction Force consisting of police and gendarmerie units.

Since the signing of the Treaty of Velsen, the Eurogendfor has been involved in three operations. The first took place in Bosnia, starting in November 2007, shortly after the signing, when the force took charge of pre-existing Integrated Police Units (IPUs) and was sent to impose Western-style state and law enforcement. This lasted until October 2010. During January that year, the EGF was sent to Haiti to give aid following the recent devastating earthquake (the force was formed to deal with both man-made and natural disasters). This time it did not operate in support of NATO or even of the UN but as part of a European unit called EUCO and was largely supplied by an EU's quasi-intelligence service named the EU Situation Centre (SITCEN).

But in the third operation, which began in April 2009 and is on-going, the Eurogendfor has formed a close association between the USA and NATO forces. According to Statewatch, the creation of an Afghan police organisation was entrusted to the force by NATO and since December of that year it has been setting up a large law enforcement body in Afghanistan which now consists of 160,000 officers. This new aspect of European foreign policy fits neatly with the basic concept of the EGF, which operates outside of parliamentary control and this can be expected to determine the nature of future European interventions.

Writing in the Clingendael Report of March 2009 under "Potential of the EUROGENDFOR", Michiel de Weger suggests that it would be beneficial for the EGF to relax the rules and include more non-gendarmerie forces. Since the EGF already sets the common training standards of the national gendarmerie forces these additions could be made more professional and so contribute to closer EU cooperation in cross-border law enforcement. It should be stressed here that the idea of a gendarmerie is as a military force designed for a state to use against its own people, not against foreign aggressors which is a totally alien concept to the British.

The Clingendael Report gives another option for the EGF which has frightening potential: the training of gendarmerie or gendarmerie-type forces across the globe. The Solidarity Clause of the Lisbon Treaty makes it clear that the force will not only be able to control a population as a police,

military and intelligence unit, but it will also be able to be deployed within the EU or outside. Following the Lisbon Treaty, its operations will be subject to very little democratic control by parliaments, and the EU parliament has no say at all since, as Alfredo Vacca the EUROGENDFOR's Legal Advisor says, it is not an EU asset.

And as Michiel de Weger says, while there is an enormous pool of over 430,000 similar paramilitary troops which currently operate in EU countries alone, there are almost 2.5 million such personnel worldwide which could be trained by the EGF to undertake global actions. These could serve a dual purpose - for example, either to support a state riven by popular protest and civil unrest or to ensure the interests of the participating countries. There are now three EU controls over UK justice and home affairs

- the European Arrest Warrant which allows UK citizens to be arrested in this country (AND FOR OFFENCES WHICH MAY NOT BE CRIMES IN THE UK) and sent to foreign jails without bail while awaiting trial

- Europol, the European Intelligence Agency whose officers have diplomatic immunity

- and now the Euro-gendarmerie Force, a multinational police force with military status, which is now able to enter any EU member state, including the UK, at the request of the government and could also operate globally as a paramilitary force.

Is this what the UK public expected when it voted in 1975 to join the Common Market?

SONYA JAY PORTER is a Surrey-based freelance writer

INDECT: BIG BROTHER'S FULL SPECTRUM SURVEILLANCE PROJECT

Nicholas West; Activist Post

The race to perfect and implement true pre-crime technology continues to accelerate. Stalwarts of computer tech, such as IBM seen below, and Microsoft in their agreement with the New York police, are investing in a cooperative effort with big government to hit the last nail in the coffin of human liberty - our thoughts.

Anonymous has previously issued several warnings and action items to thwart the encroaching surveillance grid, and now brings to light INDECT 2013 in their recent semi-satirical video. Whether or not Anonymous is controlled opposition shouldn't preclude investigation of this very real program. The INDECT initiative was reported on by The Singularity Hub back in 2009 as:

a wide ranging five year plan to bring passive and active monitoring to almost every aspect of public life in the EU. Hardware and software platforms to monitor public spaces for 'abnormal behavior', special search engines for images and documents using ubiquitous hidden digital watermarks, and internet based intelligence gathering that will monitor public networking communities – if you've had a nightmare about government invasion of privacy, chances are that Project Indect is trying to make it come true.

After tens of millions of pounds in funding, it seems that we are on the cusp of what INDECT promised for the "security of European citizens."

The core of INDECT is real-time behavioral analysis and mapping which ultimately could produce an algorithm of likely future behavior. It is the amalgamation of all of the pieces that have so far been introduced: video surveillance footage, biometric information, web-based data, drones, GPS, police databases and more. The project aims to correct the flaws contained in these disparate systems and offer seamless data integration across platforms in order to instantly determine threats.

Perhaps the creepiest aspect of this technology is the reverence given toward the machine mind vs. the human mind. The video highlights inherent limitations in wide-range human scanning and instant analysis abilities. Mankind, comprised of such weaknesses, is implied to be ill-equipped to handle the new world of the ever-present terrorist and criminal threats. Therefore, humanity must be willing to relinquish its place to the vastly superior machine matrix where real-world tracking and Web searches merge into persistent surveillance of all human activity.

And, naturally, this matrix of systems will be automated, echoing similar goals for drones and other forms of machine warfare. The result is an all-encompassing attempt to render daily life as part of a terrorist threatscape where all are suspect and thus subjected to being scrutinized by the "flawless" scanning devices and decision making of the computer mind.

The following video is IBM's concept for enabling police to use predictive analytics to reduce crime by up to 30%. It's worth noting the use of the phrase, "Let's build a smarter planet." For key information about the "Smart" planet to which IBM likes to refer, please see the series of articles by Julie Beal, outlining everything from economic control to gun control.

Just in case the above information might prompt anxiety about full implementation of such technology - and despite the fact that much of the surveillance apparatus already exists - we apparently shouldn't worry, because the European Commission would like to put our minds at ease with the following statement:

Not a European surveillance system

Contrary to widespread allegations, there are no plans for a European wide Orwellian surveillance system. INDECT will simply enable existing video surveillance systems in small areas to better react in crisis situations (such as violence on train platforms, crowd panics, hooligans throwing objects). Such video surveillance systems are already installed in underground stations or in football stadiums. INDECT will not add any new cameras, but will enable existing systems to be more efficient as it will help automate police or security officers' analysis of the huge amount of images provided through video surveillance cameras.

There will never be a centralized European INDECT system. The EU is merely co-financing a research project implemented by universities and research centres in 12 EU Member States with a total budget of € 15 mio (EU contribution of € 10,9 mio). It will then be up to Members States and research partners to implement decentralised and focussed improved video surveillance systems - in restricted areas - to improve security at places where risk is higher that persons can be harmed.

The main characteristics in a nutshell

INDECT is a security research project co-financed by the EU's Framework Programme 7 for Research and Innovation (FP7) (INDECT = Intelligent information system supporting observation, searching and detection for security of citizens in urban environment)

INDECT is not installing any cameras in the EU or filming people at random. It is also not linked to any of existing databases and social networks. All that INDECT is working on is an improved way to analyse the existing images of video surveillance cameras.

INDECT is thus developing algorithms to identify images that allow the detection of dangerous or criminal behaviour. Examples could for instance be crowd panic during public events, or when people throw objects in football stadiums.

There is no secret information on INDECT that is not published. There is nothing "secret" about INDECT. All the information on this project can be found on the website of the project and on the websites of the Commission.

INDECT is only tested by volunteers: Like most research projects INDECT is tested by volunteers. It will not be tested in real life situations. No testing of the research carried out by INDECT will take place during sport/entertainment events. An explicit disclaimer has been uploaded on the website of INDECT in 2011 on this matter.

Technologies developed by INDECT are intended for police and other law enforcement authorities of the Member States.

Should Member States intend to use such new technologies within the scope of Union law, they are bound to comply with the existing national and EU laws.

Advantages of INDECT

INDECT could have helped to avoid mass panic during the Loveparade in Duisburg, Germany

One could easily imagine situations where such a technology could have been very useful, like the crowd rush at the Loveparade in Duisburg or the tragedy in the Heysel Stadium in Brussels in 1985.

The INDECT project is trying to tackle an essential problem for police work – there is too much surveillance footage to monitor. Mass panics can be better dealt with, ambulances better directed, lives can be saved

In times of crisis or attacks it is nearly impossible for the police to monitor all the information provided by today's surveillance technologies. The most explicit example for this was the London bombing in 2005 which lead to the deaths of 52 innocent people.

Following these attacks, the metropolitan police had to withdraw hundreds of police from the streets and put them in front of screens to identify the attackers and their background.

Media do not report accurately on INDECT

Several media outlets have reported misleading information on the nature and aims of the INDECT project. This is a sign of a healthy democratic society in which media are free and no one can impose boundaries on the free flow of information. For the sake of accuracy, we have listed below a selection of misleading articles accompanied by the correct facts.

INDECT was not tested during the UEFA football championship. This was incorrectly reported by Die Zeit, Der Spiegel, AFP, Focus, Der Standard

Poland did not withdraw from the project. This was incorrectly reported by Dziennik Gazeta Prawna in the article "O tym, jak MSW wystraszyło się Anonymusa" page: 1 by Robert Zielinski on Monday, April 16, 2012 ; and by Polska The Times in the article "MSW i policja wycofuja się ze współpracy nad INDECT" page: 3 by Anita Czupryn on Monday, April 16, 2012

Not the EU, but researchers in 12 EU Member States work on INDECT

The European Commission is not working on INDECT, but is financing research carried in 12 Member States.

This statement, which can be read in full here, includes some of the additional wonderful benefits of such technology. I have to wonder which is more Orwellian: the technology itself, or the doublespeak issued by the European Commission that denies direct involvement while admitting to funding the project.

BIG BROTHER WATCH SUMMARY

Big Brother Watch

This week the Independent reported on the latest front in retail convenience and privacy, with Disney's plans to utilise RFID technology in its 'Magic Bands'.

RFID isn't a particularly new technology, but as its sophistication increases and new demands emerge for data on what consumers are doing off-line to keep up with online tracking, the reality is that it offers yet another way to track us. Particularly in environments designed for children, the broader issue about how we educate young people about privacy is a concern when they are told to accept as normal a degree of tracking in everyday environments.

Yes, it does also offer new convenience for customers so as ever, the critical issue is how companies detail the systems – and if consumers have a real choice between using the technology or not. Consumers need to be aware of what data is being collected, how it is linked to other data and how it will be used. Critically, consumers also need to know if third parties will be using the data and if so, who.

We're interested to hear people's thoughts on how the balance between customer experience and privacy can be better managed - join the debate on our website.

Southampton Council in the Dock

Southampton Council's attempt to justify its policy of requiring taxis to record audio and video of every journey took another blow this week when the 'First Tier Tribunal' ruled against it.

The case stems from a complaint made by Big Brother Watch and others to the ICO, and led to Oxford council abandoning its policy and Southampton being given an 'enforcement notice' – essentially a prosecution for breaching the Data Protection Act.

We're very pleased the Tribunal has upheld our concerns in this case and we will now write to Southampton council to urge them to drop the policy without delay.

Google's Safari snooping heads to a UK court?

In a landmark legal action, a group of Apple customers in the UK are suing Google for deliberately snooping on them, after Google despite setting their iPhone security to say they did not want to be tracked.

The much publicised Safari tracking episode resulted in a \$22.5m fine from the FTC in America, however no penalty has been handed out by the UK's Information Commissioner. When consumers see their private data being harvested on an industrial scale, with little reaction from the regulators, it is little wonder that they react by taking legal proceedings into their own hands.

This case could set a hugely important legal precedent and help consumers defend their privacy

against profit-led decisions to ignore people's rights. Google tracked people when they had explicitly said they did not want to be tracked, so it's no surprise to see consumers who believe their privacy had been steamrollered by corporate greed seeking redress through the courts.

Court of Appeal rules CRB checks can breach privacy right

In a significant ruling, the Court of Appeal has ruled that the law which requires people to disclose all previous convictions, including cautions, to certain employers is a breach of human rights.

An urgent reform of the Criminal Records Bureau is required. This case highlights how the Coalition's reforms have not gone far enough and the CRB system continues to lead to absurd results in too many cases, including thousands of people being wrongly branded criminals.

As the Magistrates Association has warned, the use of cautions is spiraling out of control, denying victims punishment where it is warranted and ruining the careers of people who have committed trivial indiscretions. It is absolutely right that children and vulnerable people are kept safe, however if a person has been deemed to be a danger to the public by the police they should have received a criminal conviction rather than a caution.

The Taurus truth : Lie detectors prompt resignation in Cornwall

This week we have led criticism of Cornwall Council for implementing "voice risk analysis", a move that prompted the resignation of the Conservative group leader Councillor Fiona Ferguson after she was warned not to reveal the technology was being used on unsuspecting residents. We applaud Cllr Ferguson for taking a stand against this illiberal and illegitimate use of ridiculed technology.

The Government's own research suggests the technology is no more reliable than tossing a coin, while one academic suggested it was as reliable as astrology. This sort of action stinks of 'guilty until proven innocent' and perhaps it would be more useful to introduce more rigorous checks and testing before benefits are handed out.

Cabinet Member for Community Safety Lance Kennedy has responded by saying "It's not water-boarding." So that's alright then.

Victory on Section 5 Reform

Speaking as the Crime and Courts Bill returned to the Commons for its second reading, the Home Secretary confirmed the Government would accept Lord Dear's amendment to the legislation and support amending the Public Order Act 1986 to remove the word 'insulting' from Section 5 of the Act.

This is a triumph for David Davis MP, Peter Tatchell, Rowan Atkinson, the Reform Section 5 campaign and all those who like Big Brother Watch supported the campaign – from the National Secular Society to the Christian Institute. In a civil society, it is not for the police to intervene when someone feels they have been insulted. The Home Secretary and her Coalition colleagues should be applauded for this important reform.

Now attention turns to the Crown Prosecution Service's consultation on prosecutions involving social media. With s127 of the Communications Act 2000 and the Malicious Communications Act 2003 both on the statute book, freedom of speech remains a critical issue for Big Brother Watch.

MORAL VICTORY FOR PROTESTOR WHO SAYS BBC 9/11 COVERAGE WAS FALSE

Ian Henshall, Reinvestigate 911

Campaigner and film maker Tony Rooke claimed a moral victory today after a UK court gave him a conditional discharge even though he has refused to pay his BBC license fee. Over 100 supporters from as far away as Denmark and Norway cheered in front of the court house as independent media people conducted interviews and photographed the crowd. Court officials had booked their largest room for the case but were at a loss to find that well over 50 people could not be fitted in.

Tony said: "I am taken a back and hugely grateful for all the support." He is asking for at least one person to take up the campaign by refusing to pay or taking other legal action (see below).

Rooke argued that the BBC's coverage of the 9/11 terror attacks in New York has been so distorted that it amounts to giving aid and comfort to the unidentified terrorists who demolished three World Trade Centre buildings in 2001. Two hijacked planes were flown into the famous Twin Towers and a third tower WTC7 collapsed later in the day. The attacks were used as the pretext for a decade of wars and the introduction of police state measures across the NATO countries. Vast personal fortunes were made by White House and CIA officials who failed to thwart 9/11.

The official 9/11 story was promulgated by the US media within minutes of the first collision, based on anonymous sources in the Bush White House. Despite a mass of new evidence coming to light in the intervening years the story has never changed and holds that the destruction was entirely caused by a band of Muslim fanatics, they succeeded without any help, and were organised by the notorious Osama Bin Laden who it is admitted was once a CIA agent. A man described as Osama Bin Laden was captured, assassinated and deposited in the ocean by US forces in Pakistan two years ago.

Sceptics say that the collapse of WTC7 must have been the result of something more than limited fires and damage from the Twin Towers, hit by the two hijacked planes. Argument has revolved around the speed of the collapse. In the BBC Conspiracy Files series, which endorsed every aspect of the official 9/11 story, it was stated that the building did not collapse at free fall speed, but later US officials were forced by video evidence to admit that it did just that.

A large group of over 1500 architects and engineers known as AE911 say that free fall collapse implies that the building had all its supports removed at the same instant which can only happen with a controlled demolition. Tony Rooke's legal argument is that in failing to correct their free fall misinformation and many other misstatements of fact, the BBC are a party to covering up the terrorists who organised the controlled demolition of WTC7.

The BBC has also failed to publicise the finding of Richard Clarke, head of counter terrorism at the White House in 2001. Two years ago Clarke made a bombshell announcement: in the weeks before 9/11 a secret "decision" must have been taken at the CIA to over rule FBI officers who wanted to arrest some of the people who according to the official story went on to commit the attacks. Clarke says that if this decision had not been made the 9/11 attacks would not have happened. Before Clarke went public the BBC programme makers were adamant this was a "conspiracy theory". Afterwards they failed to give it any prominence and failed to reinterview any of the officials who, if Clarke is right, must have lied to them.

Back in Horsham Magistrates Court campaigners have been planning future tactics. Tony Rook's victory, helped by lawyer Mahtab Aziz, implies that the BBC has a case to answer, but expert witnesses including Danish associate professor Niels Harrit were not called due to legal technicalities. However the District Judge would have read their statements before the hearing and taken them into account.

Conditional discharges are often used in political cases to indicate that the accused, though technically guilty, occupies the moral high ground. In addition the case provides a yardstick that can be raised by future campaigners. On the other hand because he has not been convicted, Tony cannot appeal and force the courts to scrutinise the highly questionable activities of the BBC as a conduit for CIA propaganda.

It's now essential for Tony's campaign that at least one person should take up the baton, refuse to pay their licence fee and appeal any conviction. Anyone interested should contact him at rookietone@hotmail.com

NOT KNOWING WHAT YOU ARE GETTING

Derek Norman; Eurorealist

(Although he does not use the term, Derek Norman is writing about what is often called 'product shrinkage' in the retail and associated trades. Metrication makes this a great deal easier because the system does not rely on big chunky numbers, but is based on micro-units. Thus you are more likely to notice a reduction from one pound to thirteen ounces than, say, from 194 grams to 178 grams. There are other tricks in the trade such as designing a bulge at the tops and bottoms of glass jars to make them look bigger than they really are, and half empty packaging.

Another profiteering racket from the big corporates? Well, we would never have guessed! Ed)

Derek Norman, reveals the metric confidence trick. Now that Christmas is over and the New Year is upon us, many people have overspent or used credit or debit cards to pay for their Christmas expenditure or even taken out shortterm loans incurring unbelievably high interest-rate repayments.

What with unprecedented rises in the cost of fuel and high levels of inflation, many people will be unable to cope with rising prices and will struggle for the rest of the year to make ends meet. If the Bank of England introduces further “quantitative-easing” by printing more money and pumping it into the economy the value of the “pound-in-your-pocket” will be reduced even further.

The price of shopping is already increasing steadily and further increases can be expected as the price of food such as fruit, vegetables and cereals become scarce due to the atrocious weather last year.

There is another hidden cost to shoppers that they may not be aware of. That is the gramscam that the food packaging industry, supermarkets and retailers have surreptitiously imposed on their customers. Polls showed that the vast majority of the British people were opposed to the introduction of metrication, but it was eventually forced on the British people and has led to this hidden cost to shoppers. This scam is achieved by reducing the size of products a small fraction at a time without reducing the price that the customer has to pay.

To understand how this works it is necessary to refer to imperial measurements. Before metrication food and most items were sold in specific units. They were in pounds and ounces. Meat, jars of jam, and tinned food products were sold in units of; one pound, half pound, quarter pound and one eighth of a pound. Larger sized products were sold in multiples of one pound: say two pounds, three pounds, four pounds, etc. Vary rarely were products sold in any other units, so you knew exactly what you were getting for your money. When metrication was introduced the weight of the majority of food items became measured in grams. These are very small units and the weight of one pound is equal to 454 grams, approximately.

The small value of the gram allows retailers and supermarkets to down size their products without a reduction in cost and without their customers noticing the difference in size. Sometimes the cost of the item is actually increased at the same time as the reduction in size by claiming the product has some new property that is beneficial to the customer.

This is the great gram scam that is inflicted on the purchaser. Some examples follow using recently purchased items that before metrication would have weighed one pound, or 454 grams in metric units. Sainsbury's Evaporated Tinned Milk - 410 grams. Sainsbury's California Tinned Prunes - 410 grams. Ship Stewed Steak - 410 grams. Glenryck Pacific Pilchards - 425 grams. Cooperative Value Tinned Custard - 385grams. Tesco Tinned Apricots- 411grams. Obviously there are hundreds of other examples that can be found in stores and supermarkets.

For the examples listed above the increased cost to the customer varies between 6% and 15%.

The same scam applies to liquid measures. The standard imperial measurement for liquids is the pint. One pint is equal to 0.57litre, approximately. Milk is usually sold in very similar looking containers in values of 4pints and 2litres in supermarkets. Comparing values, 2litres is equal to 3.5pints, half a pint less than 4pints. Again the cost to the customer is usually the same. Other scams are, one or two less chocolates in a box or bag and the reduction in the size of chocolate bars. A relatively new way for food manufactures to reduce the size of their product is to claim that it is more healthy to eat because it contains less fat, salt and sugar. I read in a newspaper recently that Mars Bars were being reduced in size for that reason. I wonder if the price will come down. I would think that a person who expends a great deal of energy doing physically hard work would prefer a Mars Bar that gives him/her more calories to replace some of the energy expended. Unfortunately, the pressure by the professional dietitians and celebrity cooks to impose their views on the contents of the food we eat encourages the manufacturers and supermarkets to downsize their products and “forget” to reduce the price to their customers.

Comparing prices per 100grams does not take into account the loss in weight to the customer from the original standard values of the pint and the pound.

Trading Standards Officers used to persecute market traders for selling their wares by the pound and say the benefits of going metric was that it allowed price comparison, which was a load of nonsense really. You can compare prices by one hundred gram units, but you cannot compare the reduction from the original imperial standard values of the pint and the pound. Compare everything to 454 grams and you can see how much the quantity has reduced since metrication was forced on us. It's strange how Trading Standards Officers do not look into the scam that has been created by enforced metrication but took drastic action against hard working market traders who sold their produce by the pound and everyone knew what they were getting.

Derek Norman is a Committee Member, British Weighs and Measures Association (BWMA). To contact or join BWMA, membership £12 a year, BWMA, 98 Eastney Road, Croydon., CRO 3TE.

ATOS DISABILITY ASSESSMENT DEATH TOLL

Occupy; via Critical Thinking

(Atos; which seems to be a European version of Halliburton with tentacles reaching into every nook of government from welfare to defence, has featured before in these pages. Even then, the true horrifying extent of the problem was not apparent ... Ed)

At Friday's General Assembly, Occupy was asked to support action to protest the disability assessment process administered by Atos which has led to more than 10,000 deaths. I suspect you, like everyone at the meeting, are shocked by these numbers which appear to be valid. Michael Meacher, in a House of Commons debate on 18th January, described the situation as follows:

The fundamental issue is this: how can pursuing with such insensitive rigour 1.6 million claimants on incapacity benefit, at a rate of 11,000 assessments every week, be justified when it has led, according to the Government's own figures, to 1,300 persons dying after being put into the work-related activity group, 2,200 people dying before their assessment is complete, and 7,100 people dying after being put into the support group? Is it reasonable to pressurise seriously disabled persons into work so ruthlessly when there are 2.5 million unemployed, and when on average eight persons chase every vacancy, unless they are provided with the active and extensive support they obviously need to get and hold down work, which is certainly not the case currently?

<http://liberalconspiracy.org/2013/01/18/watch-meacher-gives-great-speech-on-atos-assessments/>
(video)

<http://www.leftfutures.org/2013/01/my-speech-on-atos-work-capability-assessments/> (transcript)

To put this number into context, the Atos assessment death rate dwarfs that of soldiers in Afghanistan. According to the BBC, by October 30 this year, the total number of British soldiers who had died in Afghanistan since military operations began there in 2002 was 437.

That's equivalent to the number of sick or disabled people who die - while going through the

Atos/DWP work capability assessment system (or as a result of going through it) - every six weeks.
<http://mikesivier.wordpress.com/2012/11/06/atos-assessment-death-rate-dwarfs-that-of-soldiers-in-afghanistan/>

The demonisation of the most vulnerable people in society as scroungers and shirkers has led to a dramatic increase in hate crime against disabled people. Members of Disabled people against cuts (DPAC) related harrowing personal stories of how attitudes have hardened towards them.

The progressive privatisation of the welfare state began years ago and outsourcing these assessments for profit is another step towards the US model of healthcare and welfare where 47 million people live on food stamps - a chilling prospect. To attack this specific policy is not enough. We need to overturn the economic system which lies at the root of this and other problems.

Raise awareness of issues ignored by the mainstream media and share information by forwarding this email to a friend, colleague or family member who can subscribe to the Critical Thinking mailing list to receive Daily Pickings: <http://www.freecriticalthinking.org/subscribe>

NEW IMF CHICAGO PLAN VIDEO: STRIPPING BANKS OF THEIR POWER

Stuart Bramhall; The Global Economic Crisis

Last October two International Monetary Fund (IMF) economists (Jaromir Benes and Michael Kumhof), created a firestorm with their working paper The Chicago Plan Revisited. The document revives a proposal first put forward by professors Henry Simons and Irving Fisher in 1936 during the Great Depression. Fisher, like many modern economic thinkers, was extremely concerned about the extreme concentration of wealth created by credit cycles. In January Kumhof posted the following YouTube video clarifying various aspects of the proposal, as well as answering some of its critics:

The Chicago Plan would require all banks to hold sufficient capital, either in the form of deposits or “reserve credits,” for all the new loans they generate. Under this proposal, the US treasury would issue sufficient “reserve credits” to repurchase all outstanding sovereign debt held by private banks. This buyback would make up a substantial portion of the capital banks would be required to hold to generate loans. They could add to it by borrowing “reserve credits” at a low or zero interest from the US treasury.

As Kumhof explains, the aim of the proposal is to end the ability of private banks to control the monetary supply by creating money out of thin air in the form of loans. Most people have the mistaken belief that government controls the money supply by printing money. Nothing could be further from the truth. Ever since the 17th century, except for a brief period under Andrew Jackson, the money supply in all western countries has been issued and controlled by private banks.

The paper itself goes further than the video in providing historical examples in which governments, rather than private banks, controlled the money supply. Such periods are always characterized by less wealth and income inequality, greater economic stability and negligible public and private debt.

The growing movement to end debt-based money is still considered pretty radical, despite the early boost the Chicago Plan received from conservative economist Milton Friedman and his friends at the Chicago School. The fact the mainstream International Monetary Fund is promoting it suggests that the global economic crisis is far more serious and intractable than our governments and the corporate media are letting on.

The following are excellent documentaries explaining how private banks issue and control the money we all require to meet basic needs in contemporary society:

Money as Debt

97% owned

The Secret of Oz

In the October 21st Guardian, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard reports on a “revolutionary” paper by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to end the current global monetary system, in which banks create money by issuing loans. The paper’s authors, Jaromir Benes and Michael Kumhof, propose to reinstate government-issued and controlled money (in the West this ended in 1666). They claim that this would instantaneously eliminate the multi-trillion public debt owed by the US and other industrialized countries, while simultaneously creating jobs, stabilizing boom and bust cycles, leveling income inequality and reducing the monopolistic control international bankers exert over the global economy.

In addition to assuming sovereign control over the money supply, national governments would also

require banks to hold 100 percent reserves for the loans they initiate. This effectively terminates the ability of private banks to create money out of thin air, as well as massively reducing their political power. To quote Mayer Rothschild, founder of the Rothschild dynasty, "Give me control over a nation's money, and I care not who makes its laws."

How the IMF Proposal Would Be Implemented

Under Benes and Kumhof's proposal, the US treasury would issue sufficient currency to repurchase all outstanding sovereign debt from private banks and other parties. This buyback would make up a substantial portion of the reserves banks would be required to hold to generate new loans. They would build up the balance of their reserves by borrowing at low or negligible interest from the US and other government treasuries (as banks do now when they are "bailed out" by the Federal Reserve).

The growing movement to end debt-based money is still considered pretty radical, despite the grassroots "social credit" movement started by Ellen Brown, the late Richard Douthwaite and members of Positive Money and the New Economic Foundation more than a decade ago. For the Mainstream International Monetary Fund to take up the call is significant for two reasons:

- 1) It suggests that the global economic crisis is far more serious and intractable than our governments and the mainstream media are willing to let on, and
- 2) People in high places know damned well policy makers have run out of other options.

For more background on how private banks issue and control the money we all require to live on, I highly recommend the films *Money as Debt* and *97% owned*. Both are free downloads at <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/money-as-debt/> and <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/97-owned/>

THE IMF REPORTS SAYS THE CONJURING TRICK IS TO REPLACE OUR SYSTEM OF PRIVATE BANK-CREATED MONEY.

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard; Daily Telegraph

One could slash private debt by 100pc of GDP, boost growth, stabilize prices, and dethrone bankers all at the same time. It could be done cleanly and painlessly, by legislative command, far more quickly than anybody imagined. The conjuring trick is to replace our system of private bank-created money -- roughly 97pc of the money supply -- with state-created money. We return to the historical norm, before Charles II placed control of the money supply in private hands with the English Free Coinage Act of 1666.

Specifically, it means an assault on "fractional reserve banking". If lenders are forced to put up 100pc reserve backing for deposits, they lose the exorbitant privilege of creating money out of thin air. The nation regains sovereign control over the money supply. There are no more banks runs, and fewer boom-bust credit cycles. Accounting legerdemain will do the rest. That at least is the argument.

Some readers may already have seen the IMF study, by Jaromir Benes and Michael Kumhof, which came out in August and has begun to acquire a cult following around the world.

Related Articles

Entitled "The Chicago Plan Revisited", it revives the scheme first put forward by professors Henry Simons and Irving Fisher in 1936 during the ferment of creative thinking in the late Depression.

Irving Fisher thought credit cycles led to an unhealthy concentration of wealth. He saw it with his own eyes in the early 1930s as creditors foreclosed on destitute farmers, seizing their land or buying it for a pittance at the bottom of the cycle.

The farmers found a way of defending themselves in the end. They muscled together at "one dollar auctions", buying each other's property back for almost nothing. Any carpet-bagger who tried to bid higher was beaten to a pulp.

Benes and Kumhof argue that credit-cycle trauma - caused by private money creation - dates deep into history and lies at the root of debt jubilees in the ancient religions of Mesopotamian and the

Middle East. Harvest cycles led to systemic defaults thousands of years ago, with forfeiture of collateral, and concentration of wealth in the hands of lenders. These episodes were not just caused by weather, as long thought. They were amplified by the effects of credit.

The Athenian leader Solon implemented the first known Chicago Plan/New Deal in 599 BC to relieve farmers in hock to oligarchs enjoying private coinage. He cancelled debts, restituted lands seized by creditors, set floor-prices for commodities (much like Franklin Roosevelt), and consciously flooded the money supply with state-issued "debt-free" coinage.

The Romans sent a delegation to study Solon's reforms 150 years later and copied the ideas, setting up their own fiat money system under Lex Aternia in 454 BC.

It is a myth - innocently propagated by the great Adam Smith - that money developed as a commodity-based or gold-linked means of exchange. Gold was always highly valued, but that is another story. Metal-lovers often conflate the two issues.

Anthropological studies show that social fiat currencies began with the dawn of time. The Spartans banned gold coins, replacing them with iron disks of little intrinsic value. The early Romans used bronze tablets. Their worth was entirely determined by law - a doctrine made explicit by Aristotle in his Ethics - like the dollar, the euro, or sterling today.

Some argue that Rome began to lose its solidarity spirit when it allowed an oligarchy to develop a private silver-based coinage during the Punic Wars. Money slipped control of the Senate. You could call it Rome's shadow banking system. Evidence suggests that it became a machine for elite wealth accumulation.

Unchallenged sovereign or Papal control over currencies persisted through the Middle Ages until England broke the mould in 1666. Benes and Kumhof say this was the start of the boom-bust era.

One might equally say that this opened the way to England's agricultural revolution in the early 18th Century, the industrial revolution soon after, and the greatest economic and technological leap ever seen. But let us not quibble.

The original authors of the Chicago Plan were responding to the Great Depression. They believed it was possible to prevent the social havoc caused by wild swings from boom to bust, and to do so without crimping economic dynamism.

The benign side-effect of their proposals would be a switch from national debt to national surplus, as if by magic. "Because under the Chicago Plan banks have to borrow reserves from the treasury to fully back liabilities, the government acquires a very large asset vis-à-vis banks. Our analysis finds that the government is left with a much lower, in fact negative, net debt burden."

The IMF paper says total liabilities of the US financial system - including shadow banking - are about 200pc of GDP. The new reserve rule would create a windfall. This would be used for a "potentially a very large, buy-back of private debt", perhaps 100pc of GDP.

While Washington would issue much more fiat money, this would not be redeemable. It would be an equity of the commonwealth, not debt.

The key of the Chicago Plan was to separate the "monetary and credit functions" of the banking system. "The quantity of money and the quantity of credit would become completely independent of each other."

Private lenders would no longer be able to create new deposits "ex nihilo". New bank credit would have to be financed by retained earnings.

"The control of credit growth would become much more straightforward because banks would no longer be able, as they are today, to generate their own funding, deposits, in the act of lending, an extraordinary privilege that is not enjoyed by any other type of business," says the IMF paper. "Rather, banks would become what many erroneously believe them to be today, pure intermediaries that depend on obtaining outside funding before being able to lend."

The US Federal Reserve would take real control over the money supply for the first time, making it easier to manage inflation. It was precisely for this reason that Milton Friedman called for 100pc reserve backing in 1967. Even the great free marketeer implicitly favoured a clamp-down on private money.

The switch would engender a 10pc boost to long-arm economic output. "None of these benefits come at the expense of diminishing the core useful functions of a private financial system."

Simons and Fisher were flying blind in the 1930s. They lacked the modern instruments needed to crunch the numbers, so the IMF team has now done it for them -- using the 'DSGE' stochastic model now de rigueur in high economics, loved and hated in equal measure.

The finding is startling. Simons and Fisher understated their claims. It is perhaps possible to confront the banking plutocracy head without endangering the economy.

Benes and Kumhof make large claims. They leave me baffled, to be honest. Readers who want the technical details can make their own judgement by studying the text.

The IMF duo have supporters. Professor Richard Werner from Southampton University - who

coined the term quantitative easing (QE) in the 1990s -- testified to Britain's Vickers Commission that a switch to state-money would have major welfare gains. He was backed by the campaign group Positive Money and the New Economics Foundation.

The theory also has strong critics. Tim Congdon from International Monetary Research says banks are in a sense already being forced to increase reserves by EU rules, Basel III rules, and gold-plated variants in the UK. The effect has been to choke lending to the private sector.

He argues that is the chief reason why the world economy remains stuck in near-slump, and why central banks are having to cushion the shock with QE. "If you enacted this plan, it would devastate bank profits and cause a massive deflationary disaster. There would have to do 'QE squared' to offset it," he said. The result would be a huge shift in bank balance sheets from private lending to government securities. This happened during World War Two, but that was the anomalous cost of defeating Fascism.

To do this on a permanent basis in peace-time would be to change in the nature of western capitalism. "People wouldn't be able to get money from banks. There would be huge damage to the efficiency of the economy," he said.

Arguably, it would smother freedom and enthrone a Leviathan state. It might be even more irksome in the long run than rule by bankers.

Personally, I am a long way from reaching an conclusion in this extraordinary debate. Let it run, and let us all fight until we flush out the arguments.

One thing is sure. The City of London will have great trouble earning its keep if any variant of the Chicago Plan ever gains wide support.

'BETTER THAN CASH ALLIANCE' BACKED BY BILL GATES TO USHER IN CASHLESS SOCIETY

Brandon Turbeville; Activist Post

It appears that while Bill Gates was content to play the role of Microsoft innovator and billionaire philanthropist early on, he has decided that the second half of his life deserves a more open and slightly more honest twist. Indeed, in recent years Bill Gates and his Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have funded a variety of initiatives aimed at reducing population, promoting toxic vaccinations, and now hyping and funding the development of the cashless society.

In a recent article by Peter McCoy published in Bloomberg Businessweek, McCoy reveals that Bill Gates is opposed to physical cash currency because, like vaccine-free populations who are able to determine their own reproduction rates, it hurts poor people (according to Gates). Indeed, McCoy writes that Gates "hates cash" "because of its effect on people at the opposite end of the wealth spectrum—the world's poor and unbanked." Of course, in third world countries that are suffering from starvation, civil war, and abysmal living standards, the answer is clearly "banking."

If only these nations had more banks and greater access to banks – the private banks of course – then we would finally see the living standards of these nations raised to truly acceptable levels. If only more people had access to digital transactions, then empty bellies would soon be filled.

Sarcasm aside, the push toward a cashless society under the guise of benefiting the poor and underserved is a very real movement. As McCoy points out in his article, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been instrumental in this regard as major backers of the Better Than Cash Alliance – an organization that was established last September whose stated objectives are to reach the following goals by 2017:

Significant commitments by governments, the development community, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to implement electronic payment solutions instead of cash. Delivery of demand-driven technical assistance to governments, non-governmental organizations, the development community, or members of the private sector that will dramatically increase the capacity of these stakeholders to deliver end-user-focused payment technologies.

Improved economic security for millions of low-income and poor people, many of whom were previously unbanked, enabling them to use bank or electronic accounts to build savings and assets via innovative payment technologies.

The Better Than Cash Alliance founding members and financiers boasts of a list of organizations that have their own sordid histories from the distant past all the way back to present times. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which is instrumental in population reduction initiatives via vaccination programs, abortion and sterilization, and other programs; Citi, the major international bank who was intricately involved in the 2008 derivatives crisis; the Ford Foundation, representatives of which actually stated to Reece Commission Chief Investigator Norman Dodd that the goal of the foundation was to comfortably merge the United States with the Soviet Union; Omidyar Network; and VISA Inc. which has long been interested in creating a cashless society.

Yet the Better Than Cash Alliance has more than just corporate and private sector sponsors as one of the key founding members and financiers is, in fact, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), a “government” agency that answers directly to the U.S. Secretary of State. It has been understood for some time that USAID is nothing more than CIA front operation for intelligence gathering and as a facilitation mechanism for the CIA funding of foreign governments and organizations. In addition, the Better Than Cash Alliance founder and financier roster contains the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the UN’s “capital investment agency” reserved for use with the “least developed” nations.

The Better Than Cash Alliance also boasts of participation by the World Food Programme, Mercy Corps, Concern Worldwide, and CARE. The governments listed as taking part in the alliance are the governments of Afghanistan, Department of Social Prosperity of the Government of Colombia, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Peru, and Republic of the Philippines.

Yet, even without the establishment of the Better Than Cash Alliance or the recent comments by Bill Gates, it is very clear that the world is moving in the direction of an entirely cashless society. I, myself, have written many articles on this issue.

Unfortunately, what is being introduced as a method of convenience and upward social mobility will soon give way to mandates and eradication of choice. The creation of the Better Than Cash Alliance and the international push for digital transactions is one more step toward the ultimate goal of the Cashless Society and the requirement that even the most personal individual information such as iris scans, fingerprints, vein scans, facial photographs, and even DNA swabs be surrendered for the purpose of data security.

Obviously, in a society whose citizens are able to carry and make transactions with cash, there is still some semblance of anonymity available to them. There is still the opportunity to purchase staples such as food and water (via third parties if necessary) even if a system of exclusivity were to be introduced and certain people were prohibited from making purchases directly.

In a cashless system, however, an enormous amount of trust is placed in the hands of the government agencies, banks, and corporations that would then control the money for the “convenience” of the unwitting soul who has sacrificed his own personal responsibility and control for the luxury of his convenience. If even one of these institutions decide, for whatever reason, that the account of the user should be frozen, disconnected, or discontinued, the ability to purchase the basic necessities will disappear. That is, it will disappear if there is no longer the option of cash.

When all financial transactions eventually become digital, it is only a matter of time before banks, corporations, and governments begin to force citizens to bend to their will with the threat of cutting off accounts as punishment for resistance or refusal.

This is precisely why we need both resistance and refusal now, before it is too late.

Brandon Turbeville is an author out of Florence, South Carolina. He has a Bachelor's Degree from Francis Marion University and is the author of three books, Codex Alimentarius -- The End of Health Freedom, 7 Real Conspiracies, and Five Sense Solutions and Dispatches From a Dissident. Turbeville has published over 175 articles dealing on a wide variety of subjects including health, economics, government corruption, and civil liberties. Brandon Turbeville's podcast Truth on The Tracks can be found every Monday night 9 pm EST at UCYTV. He is available for radio and TV interviews. Please contact activistpost (at) gmail.com.

POSITIVE MONEY BULLETIN EXTRACTS

Positive Money Team

Where to start first? So much has happened: Our biggest conference to date, we launched our new book, some amazing statements from the financial regulator, and incredible media coverage...

Videos from Positive Money's conference

The conference this year was about how we can build a popular movement demanding a reform of the money system. It was the biggest money reform gathering in our lifetimes, worldwide; almost 300 people attended the sold-out conference. Our new book *Modernising Money* was launched there. We'll release the next videos shortly.

Breakthrough Historic Speech by Adair Turner

The Chairman of the Financial Services Authority, Adair Turner, advocated in his recent speech entitled "Debt, Money and Mephistopheles: How do we get out of this mess?" a policy that is very close to our proposals.

Financial Times – this is huge!

Something that was impossible just 2 years ago is happening now. There were two extraordinarily good articles published in *Financial Times*:

The case for helicopter money

The Chief economics editor for *Financial Times* has written an article in which he debunks some of the myths about banking and monetary policy that we have been talking about since 2010.

Pre-school lessons for bankers

The book "Where does money come from?" was quoted in this article discussing how bankers need to educate themselves about how money is created before they are allowed to teach in schools, a recently proposed plan.

Monetary reform in the World

There's lots of great mainstream media coverage on money creation abroad too:

New Zealand - A programme on national TV asked viewers on prime time: What if you were told the money a bank lent you never existed?

Switzerland - the Swiss national television's main economic programme reported for the first time on monetary reform. [Read here](#)

Ireland - *Sensible Money* had published their letter in the *Irish Independent*.

Kindle: Modernising Money

The Kindle version of the book *Modernising Money* is available now. You can order it [here](#).

* Please note, that because of the way Amazon works, Positive Money gets much less from sales of the Kindle version than we do if you buy the paper book from our website, but this can be a cheaper option for anyone outside the UK, as there's no postage.

Upcoming events:

Sheffield, Sat 2nd March 2013 - People's Forum on Debt

More from the blog:

Adair Turner tumbles to the merits of a Positive Money idea

Former Senior Economist at the World Bank on *Modernising Money* (Video)

Detlev Schlichter on Positive Money: A Response

The Chicago Plan vs. Positive Money's proposals

Some Thoughts on QE

How much money can banks create? (Video)

A guide to the Eurozone monetary system

Collapse of UK debt-ridden social system only matter of time

After two years of research, and writing, and more research, and more writing, Andrew Jackson and Ben Dyson have completed the book 'Modernising Money', which documents, in more detail than ever before, exactly how we could fix the monetary system for the benefit of business, society, and the environment. These proposals offer one of the few hopes of escaping from our current dysfunctional monetary system. And today, the book is available on sale.

"This "must read, must act" book lucidly explains two things; the urgent need for a simple basic reform of the money system to make it work more efficiently and fairly for all; and an accessible way for responsible citizens to help make the reform happen." - James Robertson, author of 'Future Money: Breakdown or Breakthrough?'

The foreword was written by Prof Herman Daly, Former Senior Economist at the World Bank.

Here are some thoughts from a few supporters who have reviewed the book:

'Modernising Money is a thoroughly researched and very timely investigation into the way money is created, managed and circulated by our commercial banks. Unlike many analyses of what is wrong with the current system however, it also offers very well thought through and workable solutions.' - Bernard Jarman

'Modernising Money demands to be taken seriously by anyone concerned by the deepening economic malaise; what is proposed therein is a fundamental reform of the monetary system in the interests of the majority of the population.'

'Modernising Money is much needed because it draws attention to the extreme differences between the historical reality of money and the textbook story which is taught in high schools as well as to students of economics.' - Mark Jansen

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2 CHURCH VIEW
ST GILES TERRACE
CHETTON
BRIDGNORTH
SHROPSHIRE
WV16 6UG
Tel; (01746) 789326
frankinshropshire@hotmail.co.uk**