

## Introduction to Counter Culture

SOME YEARS AGO my father came across a booklet written by his grandfather in about 1840. I read it with great interest because it gave me an insight into how my family had thought and lived when based in Frankfurt. It is within this tradition that privately I have published this booklet. Principally, it consists of a number of statements that I have made over 20 years. I have not tried to edit the material to make it flow easily from one section to the next. It is no more than an assembly of scattered thoughts.

For most of my life I have lived in France and England and I have benefitted from feeling at home in both. But this has been compensated for by always being somewhat of a foreigner. In turn this has made it possible to take a more detached view. Since an early age I have rejected the prevailing cultures in England and France which seemed to me to be the cultures of decay.

My views can be summed up as having believed that the best way to freedom and prosperity is competitive free enterprise within a meritocratic society; that national solidarity should take the form of a safety net for those who desperately need it and not a suffocating blanket for all; that the dominant geopolitical problem is the imperial and totalitarian ambition of the Soviet Union and that this can only be controlled through strength and even intransigence.

Most people would think that these views were typical of those held by contemporary conservatives in both England and France. Not so.

In Great Britain the Conservatives stood for the protection of established privileges. The Conservative Party was primarily a middle class party whose members thirsted for gentrification. They feared mobility and change because these would threaten the established order. As early as 1945 the then leaders of the Conservative Party decided that they were fighting a losing battle and therefore their strategy was to lose as slowly as possible.

My statement to the Harvard Business School (page 81) describes the policies of the, post war Conservative Party conceived by R.A. Butler, Harold Macmillan and Oliver Poole and as related to me by the latter. At the United Press International Conference (page 4) I tried to describe some of the problems of the British class system. In my statement to the Small Business Bureau (page 41) I attempted to explain one of the fundamental reasons for the industrial decline of Britain. This was the astonishing rejection by the emerging industrial middle class of the virtues that had allowed them to succeed. Instead they chose to ape, as best they could, the mannerisms and culture of the class they were supplanting, so developing the British disease of gentrification. When addressing the Food Manufacturers Federation (page 19) I described the inevitable consequences of the progressive transfer of productive resources to social causes. This process was carried out by both conservatives and socialists, the former as part of their strategy of losing slowly, the latter as part of their ideology.

Socialist ideology, when applied, inevitably leads to severe loss of freedom and to national impoverishment. This I described in my statement to the ICC (page 14).

At the annual conference of the Institute of Directors (page 26) I tried not only to diagnose the British disease but also to propose a positive plan. With hindsight it did not go far enough.

My frustration about the French cultural sickness and its political and economic consequences, also led me to propose a plan for post-socialist France. This was published in *L'Express* (page 58).

The problems of France and Britain seem similar in some respects but in reality are fundamentally different. In neither country are people free. They would not acknowledge it and probably don't much notice it. The French are trapped by a caste of mandarins. These are the highly trained, able and effective civil servants who emerged from the specialised state schools. It is incredible that in a democracy there can be a special and parallel system of education to produce an elite to run the state apparatus. Inevitably the result has been that instead of having a government of citizens working for their fellow citizens, an elite caste has been created which has developed the apparatus of government to a degree that stifles both the French and France. The omnipresence and omnipotence of the state and its servants; the fudging of the line between the executive branch of government and the judiciary; the state control of the media and the suffocation of the residual parts of free enterprise is a formula that is lethal to freedom and to prosperity.

In Britain, freedom is severely impaired by the class system. At the top sits the old aristocracy and upper class which is now decadent. It served the country well for a very long time. Below comes the gentrified middle classes. Underneath is the repository of a great deal of vigour. Unfortunately it is trapped. Under such circumstances who can be surprised that the under class has become alienated and that its vigour, instead of serving the community, is in conflict with it.

Geo-politically the situation in France and Britain is not totally dissimilar, the conservatives in both countries have compromised with the Soviet Union. In France, de Gaulle and his successors did so partly to establish what they perceived as the independence of France and partly to buy the political support of the local Communist Parties. In Britain it was weakness as usual. Carrington and Pym are prime examples of weak, myopic and patrician Foreign Secretaries.

The socialist parties in both countries consist of an alliance of social democrats and representatives of the harder left. In Britain because of the lack of an electorally significant official Communist Party many communists adopted the socialist label. The softness of the social democrats has allowed the hard left and communists to gain substantial power in the Labour Party. Perhaps they have now obtained irreversible control. On page 121 is a statement I made in Washington which touched on this subject.

So, as you can see, for most of my life I have despised the established conservative and socialist parties in both France and Britain. I have had respect for the power and commitment of the communists and their hard left allies and I have always recognised them as intractable and formidable enemies. Obviously the centrist parties have been no more than a softer, weaker and even more hopeless version of the conservatives and the social democrats. Nonetheless, during the period, I supported the Conservatives, sometimes thinking and hoping that there was a real change, for example the emergence of 'Selsdon Man'. But usually I had to hold my nose and control my nausea when I voted. Being so out of sympathy with all sides led to some interesting litigation, highlights of which I reproduce on pages 144-9. The article by Oleg Bitov in the *Moscow Literary Gazette* (page 150) was one of many in the Moscow press all of which are whimsical and entertaining.

In the US my participation has been principally in the debate about business. I have enjoyed it, so I reproduce it on page 103. I was pleased that my testimony to the Subcommittee on Securities of the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs of the US Senate in 1985 reflects the identical ideas that I defended in Paris in 1972 at a Conference sponsored by the *Figaro* (page 55). Testifying before the Senate Subcommittee was an unusual pleasure. It was one of the first times in my life that I was not counter culture and that I found myself in fundamental agreement with many of the members of the panel.

I do not intend to finish this introduction without giving some views on the current position.

Traditionally in continental Europe 'the right' has consisted of two major strands of thought, the Fascists and the traditional conservatives. The Fascists, who are commonly described as being of the extreme right, in fact hold beliefs that are in direct conflict with those of true conservatives. Fascists believe in the corporate state and authoritarianism to a degree which eliminates freedom. The traditional conservative party has been patrician, class bound, protective of established privilege and of the status quo. It is right that they should both have been discredited. But today there might be a change. In the USA the new Republicans have succeeded in shedding most of their patrician heritage. Instead of looking to the past they are now opening up the future. Instead of supporting the establishment, they are creating a great counter revolution based on new opportunities for all who wish to seize them.

Now it is the Democratic Party which represents the past and which clings to the triangular alliance between big business, big unions and big government. The new Republicans have some weaknesses which might hurt in the future. Some of their supporters maintain a certain religious intolerance which is contrary to the American way. Americans went to America to find freedom from monarchs, tyrants, class systems and religious persecution. Traditionally the American state has been a guardian of liberties rather than a tutor of righteousness. I do not believe that Americans will tolerate any loss of these liberties. The other principal weakness is an apparent blind spot about the environment. There can be nothing more precious than personal freedom and a healthy environment. Life is not worth living without the former and cannot be lived without the latter.

In Britain there is Mrs Thatcher, a woman of awe inspiring courage. Unfortunately when she set out on her crusade to save her country, she thought that economic revival could be brought about by sound management of the economy. But Britain's problems are also cultural (see the draft of my lecture sponsored by the Centre for Policy Studies page 200). Balancing the books in a prudent manner is not sufficient. Even the extraordinary accomplishment of liberating state enterprises, controlling the power of the unions and reducing the role of the state is not enough. Britain needs an even loftier vision. And that must be to root out the class system and to free the latent energies of the people as a whole. But unfortunately the British nation is very tired. It might prefer to lie down and die slowly rather than to muster the vigour needed for revival. But I don't write off Mrs Thatcher's crusade. She might still succeed.

France is not unlike Florence before the Renaissance. To flourish it needs to exile from all positions of power the caste that has stifled it. In Florence that was the aristocracy. In France it is the civil service mandarin. The French are becoming aware of this problem. The conservative opposition should succeed in gaining power in 1986 and most of its leaders pay homage to the idea of 'liberalisme'. But the power of the bureaucracy is great and the pleasures of political power in a statist country are intoxicating. Yet here again, things could improve. There is an emerging young generation of freedom loving politicians and perhaps they will be able to force their leaders to keep their electoral promises. Maybe they, themselves, might become the leaders.

On paper, Europe has all the attributes to succeed in the modern world except that Europeans believe in false ideologies. In many ways these are the consequences of all the torments of the past; monarchies, tyrannies, class structures, religious intolerance, etc.' It will take wise leaders to cut them all away.

I have added two further chapters. The first consists of the draft of an interview which I understand will be published shortly in the French magazine *l'Expansion* (pages 190-9). The other is a lecture which I plan to give during the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool on 10th October 1985 at the invitation of the Centre for Policy Studies (pages 201-212). I expect this to be the last public statement that I will make in Britain.

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