

Home Summary Talks / Events Contact Reviews Readers' Feedback Sample Chapter
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The Prostitute State

The summer of 2014 marked the 22nd anniversary of my becoming an active environmental campaigner, after spending time with the Yanomami people in the heart of the Amazon forest and seeing first-hand the destruction wreaked there by our consumer anti-society. Since then I have pursued many paths to try and tackle this. I have helped local environmental campaigns, turned my home into a carbon negative retro eco-house, became Deputy Chair of the Liberal Democrats, wrote an eco-column for the Independent and worked as an eco-auditor advising businesses and charities.

Millions of people across the planet are carrying out similar actions trying to save the planet's eco-systems from the mega-disasters bulldozing them into oblivion. But despite all of this massive positive global effort by humanity, the destruction continues. The oceans are getting more acidic, CO2 emissions have broken the catastrophic 400ppm barrier and a wave of human-caused animal and plant extinctions is sweeping the earth.

The 2011 Occupy Movement forced me to stop and think why. The conclusion I came to was that we no longer live in a properly functioning democracy but rather in The Prostitute State. From my personal experiences I developed a thesis that this state has four pillars – a corrupted political system, a prostituted media, a hijacked academia and a criminal tax-haven system.

Pillar 1 – Our Corrupted Democracy

As a senior Lib-Dem I got a wide range of eco-friendly and progressive policies adopted by the party-conference. But invariably the corporate lobbyists, who surrounded the party's leadership, smothered almost every single democratic decision. Reams of the top party echelons are or were corporate lobbyists. It is the same in the other major parties. Corporate lobbyists are calling the shots, not we the voters. Take for example the nuclear industry.

Almost every single former Labour Minister for Energy is a lucratively paid nuclear-lobbyist, as was Nick Clegg's last general election Lib Dem Treasurer. Despite the public favouring renewable-power over nuclear by huge margins, all three main parties are now committed to pouring billions of our money into poisonous new nuclear white-elephants. Huge swathes of government are now under corporate influence including our civil-service, the armed forces and police, the House of Lords and even our regulatory systems.

Pillar 2 – Our Prostituted Academia

Our sacred halls of learning whether they be primary schools, secondary schools or university research departments are increasingly being taken over by corporate funding.

Even in inner-city Peckham, the local academy's teaching policies are now dictated by a Tory Party-donor rather than professional teachers. The national think-tanks which frequently guide government policy are now often merely propaganda fronts for corporations, whether they are oil corporations or robber banks. All of the centre or centre-right think-tanks refuse to reveal who is funding them, despite the fact they are quoted in the prostituted media as "independent" think-tanks. The prostitution of our education system means the potential extinction of any independent thought being taught to our future voting citizens.

Pillar 3 – The Criminal Tax-Havens

My efforts to clean-up dubious Lib Dem funding by rich-donors who then received peerages or personal access to the leader, were opposed by senior Lib-Dems connected to the off-shore tax-haven cartels. I only made the connection after resigning from its Federal Executive over their refusal to halt the corrupt practice of Lib-Dem peers selling political-lobbying services to corporations. When I then examined fund-raising in the other parties, I realised they were all dependent on massive funding from these appalling tax-havens. Nick Clegg's Treasurer again was a lobbyist for the truly obscene Cayman Islands. Almost all Tory Treasurers have been linked with tax-havens. So were almost all Labour party millionaire donors during the Blair years.

The UK's tax-havens are instrumental in shifting the UK tax-burden from corporations to ordinary workers and the creation of our huge public-spending deficit. They are also the route by which the wealth of the poorest nations on earth is funnelled into western banks, leaving a trail of poverty, disease, and environmental destruction in their wake. By funding our democracy they ensure their control on international finance and power.

Pillar 4 – Our Prostituted Media

But it is the final pillar The Prostituted Media which ensures that all of the above corruption of democracy is carried out without fear of the population rebelling to defend our rights and interests. Five tax-avoiding billionaires control over 80% of UK daily newspapers. 18% of the rest is largely in the hands of international financial corporations, leaving only the Guardian at 2.6% to represent the interests of the non-billionaire section of society. These five billionaires also own vast swathes of our TV, film and book industries, thus exerting an iron grip on almost everything our culture even thinks about.

As long as Murdoch (Sun/Times), Desmond (Express), Rothermere (Mail), the Barclay Brothers (Telegraph) or their ilk monopolise our prostituted media, we will never create the social and environmental justice that so many of us dream and work so hard for.

Thus to summarise, if the rich elites and corporations control the production of thought, the dissemination of thought, the implementation of thought and the funding of thought, then we no longer live in a democracy but The Prostitute State.

So What Can Be Done?

Whilst the forces ranged against our ecosystems and social justice are immense. Societies have successfully overcome such odds before. The first and simplest thing is for each of us personally to stop feeding The Prostitute State. Stop giving it your money. Move your bank accounts, energy supply, newspaper, food buying etc away from the corporate controllers. Buy local products, install or use green energy, read The Guardian, invest ethically and eat organic food from Farmers Markets. Every penny we remove from the corporate world helps cut the funds for the lobbyists hijacking our democracy.

But whilst personal action is crucial for our own integrity – it is not enough. Community action is also vital - join whatever political movement your soul feels drawn to, whether that is Unlock Democracy, the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency, FOE, Greenpeace, the Green Party etc.

21st Century Great Reform Act

But finally and most importantly we must call on Civic Society, from the National Trust to our Trade Unions, from our churches to our credit unions, to urgently call for a 21st Century Great Democratic Reform Act as they did in the 19th century.