

The left's gravy trial derailing

By Maurice Newman, The Australian, 20 January 2015.

IN the battle for ideas it is now clear the Left controls the commanding heights. In everything from the economy to sport, the prevailing direction is left. After decades of stereotyping, indoctrination and the clever use of language, Western voters have been conditioned to accept the beneficence of the state.

Politically this has set the stage for governments to see “market failure” in everything. It has become an excuse for an avalanche of regulations and regulators and allowed leftist intellectuals to incessantly bash the very essence of “capitalism”.

Free market capitalism

They have successfully implanted the notion that free market capitalism is synonymous with profiteering, greed, unequal wealth distribution and, the entrenchment of privilege which must be restrained.

Yet there is no competition commissioner to control the predatory actions of the state, or regulator to rein in reckless central bankers.

Voter acquiescence has been bought by both sides of politics, but conservatives everywhere have been politically outsmarted. They are apologetic when they should demand apologies.

The Left to set the agenda

Rather than be true to their values, they have too easily rolled over and allowed the Left to set the agenda on economics and social issues, incapable of arguing an internally consistent position. Quite often conservative policies are indistinguishable from their progressive counterparts.

The Left's victories have been hard won, cumulative and unsustainable, but woe betide any government today which seeks to unwind earlier excesses or restore fiscal responsibility through spending cuts. It will meet well organised, articulate and often hostile, opposition. Unwinding the welfare state carries perilous political risks as the Abbott government is finding out.

The United Nations leftist ideology

Meanwhile, the global repository of leftist ideology, the United Nations, daily reinforces the collectivist mantra, applying powerful peer group pressure to recalcitrant states. Ever more wealth redistribution, moral relativism, open migration and the spreading of influence through supranational regulations, is the standard fare directed primarily at Western democracies.

Nowhere is this push more obvious than with the UN's prosecution of climate change policies through which the Geneva-based bureaucracy seeks to profoundly influence member states' domestic policies.

The political left has seized on climate change as the new Marxism. It rejects empirical evidence which is inconvenient and promotes dubious and sometimes fabricated science as proven. In true totalitarian style it seeks to shut down debate and ruin the careers and reputations of those who dare to oppose the orthodoxy.

It isn't necessary to engage in conspiracy theory to see how the Left has successfully infiltrated Western political thinking.

Fertile hearts and minds of the young

It starts with the fertile hearts and minds of the young. Teachers' colleges, teachers' unions and education bureaucrats have colluded over time in curriculums setting, gradually shifting the emphasis away from maths and hard science to the softer social sciences and leftist ideology.

Performance ranking and competition within and between schools have been progressively downplayed.

At the tertiary level teachers have a compliant audience. Sharri Markson, this newspaper's media editor, posed as a student in some of the nation's most prestigious journalist schools and found "a built-in bias" and "an assumption that if we're all left-wing journalists, that will be a positive thing."

Abandonment of scientific rigour and ethics

Multiple examples of the abandonment of scientific rigour and ethics in the interests of political propaganda continue to come to light. Blogger Joanne Nova, (joannenova.com.au) highlights a peer-reviewed leftist paper by psychology professor Stephan Lewandowsky (University of Western Australia), et al, which caused researcher Jose Duarte to be "flummoxed ... why a paper so weak was written, but more so why it was ever published ..." Yet while demonstrated as containing serious errors, the paper has not been withdrawn. Such is the audacity of the Left.

In similar vein Nova exposes the ABC for telling us that the Bureau of Meteorology claims Queensland has experienced "its worst drought in 80 years", yet according to the BoM's own website, the current drought is the worst in only nine years. But a compliant media would rather an inconvenient truth remain untold than spoil the left's narrative.

"The stupidity of the American voter"

We have also watched the spectacle of MIT professor, Jonathan Gruber, the architect of Obamacare, arrogantly confessing that to ensure socialised medicine in the US was passed by congress, he preyed on "the stupidity of the American voter" by muddying waters. To him the ends justified the means. So much for academic integrity.

Unfortunately for the Left, the wheels are starting to fall off the gravy train. Greece, which is in the vanguard of troubled economies, is the canary in the global coal mine. It is essentially bankrupt and a humanitarian disaster. Inequality is exploding and an entire generation is expected to face the prospect of poverty in older age.

That's not exactly what the Left was promising. But Greece never fully came to grips with its runaway fiscal situation and it serves as a reminder that markets do work and that unexpected events can quickly overcome a complacent nation.

Neo-Nazis and radical socialists are on the march

When hardship and uncertainty come knocking, voters are open to unorthodox solutions. In Europe the neo-Nazis and radical socialists are on the march.

In Britain, polls suggest working class voters are deserting the major parties, as was confirmed last November when the Labour seat of Rochester and Strood, was won in a by-election by UKIP's Mark Reckless (a former Conservative).

The people are waking up

In his victory speech Reckless repeated his election promise that "If you believe in freedom, if you believe in low taxes, if you believe in localism, if you believe in people power, ... then come with us and we will give you your country back." He praised Britain's radical tradition as a noble and high minded one, which took power from the elites and spread it among the people, championed appointment on merit, Gladstonian finance, universal suffrage and racial tolerance. It clearly struck a chord with the electorate and won him the 271st most winnable seat in Britain. The people are waking up!

Maurice Newman is the chairman of the Prime Minister's Business Advisory Council. These views are his own.