

I AM A LIBERTARIAN BECAUSE ...

BRIAN MICKLETHWAIT



This piece began life as one page of a student magazine called *Blueprint*, published by the Conservatives of Exeter University in 1992. It apparently caused a gratifying stir.

Does this kind of agitprop do any good? I like to think that maybe it did. Perhaps most early readers only noted the stir-causing bits and little else, but I like to think that some of the more thoughtful ones may have glanced through the rest of it as well, and been stirred into thought as well as politically correct outrage.

Also, there's much to be said for soundbites, as aphorisms are now disapprovingly dubbed by those who disapprove of them.


The Internet (www.libertarian.co.uk gets you the entire published output of the Libertarian Alliance) makes this kind of exercise even more useful, because the Internet makes it so much easier for the thoughtful ones to dig deeper.

"Brenda", by the way (see page 2), is the nickname sometimes applied to Britain's "sovereign", Queen Elizabeth II.

Brian Micklethwait – May 2002

I AM A LIBERTARIAN ...

- Because wherever in the world something resembling libertarianism happens, life is good.
- Because wherever in the world the opposite of libertarianism happens, life is crap awful.
- Because letting other people take care of themselves means I don't have to.
- Because me taking care of myself means other people don't have to.
- Because, on the whole, people *are* free and it is accordingly more relaxing and more convenient to believe that they should be. Less needs to be changed.
- Because classical compact discs are wonderful.
- Because libertarianism frightens the horses.



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Director: Dr Chris R. Tame Editorial Director: Brian Micklethwait Webmaster: Dr Sean Gabb



FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

- Because I honestly and truly don't care what other people do to each other in bed, or in any places where I am not regularly present, provided only that they are happy. Not caring is the essence of charity. Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people trying to help.
- Because an armed society is a polite society.
- Because there isn't enough sex and violence on television.
- Because selfish people are so much more pleasant to deal with. They tell you what they want. And they listen when you tell them what you want because what you want could make them rich.
- Because if hard drugs are as dangerous as people say, there is no better punishment for taking hard drugs than the consequence of taking hard drugs. Reality is, as always, its own reward and its own punishment.
- Because maybe hard drugs aren't so bad for you after all! You decide. That way I don't have to decide for you. (They terrify me and I want nothing to do with them, or the with the Drugs Squad).
- Because privately owned streets will be better policed, and in general, a vast improvement to the state of public morals.
- Because the Arts Council is to art what the Fire Brigade is to fire.
- Because my sovereign is me, not Brenda.
- Because I like writing about libertarianism.
- Because people like reading what I write about libertarianism.
- Because those who don't like reading what I write about libertarianism shouldn't have to read it.
- Because newspapers should be allowed to publish lies, filth, nonsense and tastelessness. Even *The Guardian* should be allowed.
- Because the people of Hong Kong should come and rescue the British economy.
- Because pollution is the result of things not being sufficiently owned. Nobody owns the ozone layer. The Adam Smith Institute should cut it up and sell the bits.
- Because people should be allowed to be racist bastards.
- Because if total state control is a mess, and a "balance" between state control and liberty is half reasonable, then total liberty would be totally reasonable.
- Because tea granules are also wonderful.
- Because the people who run the European Common Market are a gang of thieves. Nobody needs to "harmonise" a market except those who create that market by harmonising things amongst themselves.
- Because life would be terminally boring if the only things that were allowed were things that I personally would allow.
- Because people should be allowed to choose their own risks.
- Because people should be allowed to kill themselves.
- Because a boss should be allowed to fire his wage slave, without compensation, if he has taken a dislike to the colour of her eyes.
- Because sexual harassment is in the eye of the harassee.
- Because in a society without government safeguards, reputation is everything.
- Because free people follow wise traditions, and governments destroy wise traditions.
- Because the defence of capitalism cannot be left to capitalists.
- Because being exploited is better than not being exploited.
- Because students should pay their own damn fees. Student loans already exist; they are called overdrafts.
- Because I'm the Editorial Director of the Libertarian Alliance, and stopping being a libertarian would be inconvenient.