

BRITISH VALUES - A DISCUSSION PAPER

1 MARCH 2015

This paper contains the following sections:

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1. CONTEXT

This discussion paper is written from the standpoint of “Grassroots conservatives” to **stimulate and contribute to the current debate on 'British Values'** following its fringe meeting at the Annual Party Conference last September.¹ This debate takes place in the context of recent government policy decisions which have challenged the culture and the core beliefs of many British people,² a progressive decline in membership of the mainstream Parties, the rise of UKIP, and a new approach to Ofsted inspections under the heading “British Values”; and in the context of the rise of a number of young male British citizens involved in violent Islamic extremism.³

This may be a controversial subject and those from different political persuasions and /or beliefs will have different views to those expressed in this paper – hence the desire to stimulate a debate so that at least a consensus on defining certain core “British values” can emerge from a spectrum of views. After all, irrespective of our political viewpoints, we are all equally British.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the paper is thus to try to assist a Conservative led Government to combat Islamic extremism at source, and equip the Conservative Party hopefully to win the coming election and best serve the good of the nation. Rachel Sylvester writing recently in the Times⁴, described a cultural clash right at the head of the Conservative Party between the apparent pessimistic traditionalists and

1 See www.grassrootsconservatives.org.uk.

2 Why have values which have been central to our society for centuries been allowed to be undermined and stigmatized in the last twenty years? Why is it that those very established institutions which have long been the custodians of British values now find themselves under attack, such as schools targeted by Ofsted in the name of *supposed* British values such as “equality” and ‘diversity’. It would virtually be unthinkable for previous generations to have had to spell out what British Values were, as it was, probably rightly, assumed that pretty much everyone knew instinctively what they were, and were predominantly of one mind.

3 This subject has come to the forefront of political thinking in the light of the radicalisation of certain young Muslims in Britain following 9/11, 7/7, the Iraq, Afghan and Syria conflicts, and now the rise of ISIL and the atrocities in Paris. Radical Islamism has regrettably penetrated by subterfuge the heart of the Muslim community.

4 The Times, November 18, 2014

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optimistic liberals. We challenge her assumption that traditionalist means pessimistic. On the contrary, it is only when we know where we have come from that we can know who we are and move with confidence into the future. The move towards secularism, at first barely perceptible, is now evidently not only a major cultural clash but the exercise of a cultural hegemony, drowning out any dissenting voice.

This was clearly illustrated in the BBC Question Time on February 5 by Tristram Hunt's sneering dismissal of the role of nuns teaching in schools and Christina Odone's highlighting of the violation of Jewish values by Ofsted inspectors. What is troubling is that the Education Secretary made no contribution to this element of the debate.

Another example is the experience of a long standing, well respected JP who was sent for re-education after expressing in private chambers his sincerely held views on adoption. He stated that 'since making the decision I have been put under huge pressure to conform to the conclusions that others wanted me to reach, but I knew that I had to dissent, for the sake of the child. Christian faith demands setting aside ideologically convenient conclusions and fighting for the best interests of the children'. **Whatever happened to tolerance and dissent** – surely two enshrined British values? The recently expressed nervousness of the Jewish community to renewed anti-semitism also indicates that something has seriously gone wrong in the body politic.

What is at stake is the "real values" as emphasised by Odone that we wish our children, grandchildren and country to inherit, and which will shape our, and more importantly their, future.

3. DEFINITION OF VALUES

Dictionary

This debate concerns the values of society: family, community and government. The Oxford Dictionary defines values as "**one's principles or standards, one's judgement of what is valuable or important in life**"; Collins Dictionary defines them as "**the moral principles and beliefs or accepted standards of a person or social group.**" The accepted standards of a nation derive from the shared history and experience of that nation. Moral principles are by their nature absolute and must rest on a coherent world view. This paper therefore looks at the history and the predominantly Judaeo-Christian heritage of Great Britain.

Constitutional or Cultural?

There is a difference, although also some overlap, between values understood as legal and constitutional principles, and values understood as respected, but not immutable, cultural practices. The British, certainly Conservative, preference has always been for the latter: hence our unwritten Constitution based on precedent and practice, and the resistance to the European Human Rights Act (as compared to a UK Bill of Rights) and preference for Conventions or Codes.

British

But what values should we encourage and stand up for here in Britain? What supposed values should we not stand up for, or challenge? This is more difficult to define as most values are common to many other nations. The British element in the equation therefore has to rest on the specific historical experience, culture and ethos which has developed over time, which has been well articulated in Appendix 1, as presented to the Queen and the Prime Minister in October 2014.

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4. HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN – from a Conservative viewpoint

Conservatives build on the past for the benefit of the future

To begin to identify specifically British⁵ values, it is essential to understand how the British nation and its inhabitants have developed their specific moral code, beliefs, ethos and principles over, say, the last 2000 years. British values have developed over the history of the country and stood the test of time, through trial and error, through war and sacrifice. They have not been produced by a recent committee but forged out of the experience of millions down the centuries. We must therefore pay attention to our heritage and history. This is part of the conservative disposition: to build on the solid foundations of the past for the benefit of the future.

Disraeli declared in 1832 that “Nations have characters, as well as individuals”. Dr Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School, coined the term “national identity”, and John Stuart Mill, in “The English National Character” (1834) tried to analyse it, concluding that it was...created by race, language, religion, geography and above all “the possession of a national history ... (a) community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret”. In his book “The English and their History”,⁶ Professor Robert Tombs says of the Tories that...“they retain a ‘country party’ suspicion of expensive state bureaucracy and of ideology, regarding their own opinions as simple common sense”.

Island Story / Being British

Our history inevitably is unique and different to that of other countries. It spans a long time and has continuously evolved. The country has endured conquests by Romans, Anglo- Saxons, Vikings and Normans. But since 1066, it has successfully defended itself from invasion threats from France (1216), Spain (1588), France (1797 and 1803/5) and Germany (1940) to give the country a defiant view of itself as an 'island race', on the edge of Europe. De Gaulle recognised this when he cited as reasons for vetoing Britain's entry into the EEC, May 16th 1967: “the special relations that tie the British to America... the existence of the Commonwealth and their preferential relations with it...the special commitment that they still have in various parts of the world and which, basically, distinguishes them from the continentals”.⁷

We are aware that conservatives understand the history of Britain perhaps differently from those who view it primarily through the prism of conflict and strife such as religious, ideological, class, region and ethnic differences. This explains why there can be divergent views on what is meant by “British Values”.

Parliament and Democracy

Britain was one of the first countries to have a representative Parliament but only achieved universal suffrage in 1928. Magna Carta was initially sealed in 1215 and the first form of the English Parliament is considered to be De Montfort's in 1265. Following the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and

⁵ While recognising that Scotland, Ireland and Wales each have a distinctive and unique identity, we cover in this paper those values which we consider are common across the British Isles. (As 85% of the population of Britain lives in England, English values and British values are considered synonymous). While there are many of Christian and other faiths who are not Conservatives, and many Conservatives who are of different faiths and none, the 2011 Census states that 66.6% of the British people stated they had a religious faith (Christian 58.8%, Muslim 4.5%), 26.1% no religion and 7.2% not stated.

⁶ Allen Lane, 2014

⁷ <<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1967-degaulle-non-uk.html>>

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the Act of Union (England and Scotland) in 1707, Parliament became paramount. The Act of Tolerance was introduced in 1689 and the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829.

Though there was conflict between England and Wales and Scotland right up to 1746, apart from the “War of the Roses” of 1460-1485 and the Cromwellian Civil War of 1642-1649, England has not since suffered significantly from internal strife or bloody revolutions.⁸ Following the Cromwellian era, the country sought to settle its contest of ideas and differences through the expression of its Parliamentary democracy. Since then the British armed forces have played no part in political life, and have never attempted a coup. Their duty is to serve Queen and Country.

The Conservative tradition has stressed the continuity of government and antipathy to discontinuity and hence to radicalism, with a preference for tradition over reason purely acting alone.

Global Engagement

Being an island, Britain developed into a global seafaring trading nation. Through the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy it established influence and relationships with all corners of the world. From the 1600s it developed primarily a trading Empire which, at one stage, covered over a sixth of the world and established itself on the East Coast of North America, the West Indies, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sub Saharan Africa, the Indian subcontinent and other areas.

The fate of the nation economically has waxed and waned. Today, Britain retains its own currency (‘he who controls the currency controls the country’⁹), has the sixth largest economy in the world, is predominant in world financial markets, has the fourth largest (though diminishing), armed forces’ budget is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and continues to have global influence through the 53 member Commonwealth, headed by HM The Queen.

Sacrifice for the common good / Liberty

The impact and sacrifice of the two World Wars has had a profound impact on the psyche of the nation. “Poppies at the Tower” showed that this still has enormous resonance with the British people. In both wars, Britain stood up to tyranny, even though the effect was to bleed the nation dry of both manpower and resources such that, although the aggressors were eventually defeated by the Allies, Britain lost its Empire. Some may question the wisdom of going to war, but defeat and subjugation would have been infinitely worse.

However the country was not vanquished.¹⁰ Winston Churchill, immediately after Dunkirk in June 1940, proclaimed, at the greatest moment of extreme crisis for the British nation: “I expect that the battle for Britain is about to start. Upon the battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation”.

⁸ The historically troubled Irish relationship was settled in 1922 through the creation of a separate Irish Republican state in Southern Ireland. The long and bloody period of the “troubles” in Northern Ireland was brought to an all-party negotiated settlement known as the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement which holds the promise for greater harmony for the future. Universal franchise, after much agitation but without violence or bloodshed, was finally achieved in 1928 with women being given the equal right to vote. Political power progressively transferred to the House of Commons, establishing the supremacy of Parliament.

⁹ “Let me issue and control a nation’s money and I care not who writes the laws.” Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1812).

¹⁰ Unlike the occupation of France in the Second World War, and unlike Germany which suffered at the end of the First War and whose infrastructure was virtually completely destroyed by the end of the Second War.

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Religious Beliefs / Conscience and Tolerance

Britain was originally Pagan but progressively was converted to Christianity from the first century AD onwards.¹¹ The Philosopher Emperor Marcus Aurelius, in his book *Meditations*, writes at considerable length on the subject of inherited values and morality, and how to lead a just and worthy life. By the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 313AD, the English Church was flourishing. While the native Britons became Christian, it was primarily Augustine's mission in 597 which led to the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons.

Alfred the Great (849-899) King of Wessex was a devout Christian, a learned and merciful man of graciousness and level headed knowledge, who encouraged education and improved the kingdom's legal system, military structure and the people's quality of life. Historians refer to his grandson, Athelstan, as the First King of the English. Following the Norman conquest, many more Churches were built up and down the country and the great medieval cathedrals of Britain¹² were built between 1040-1540, together with the great abbeys, such as Westminster, and monasteries. Religion was at the heart of day-to-day and moral life.

Following the divorce of Henry VIII from his first wife to marry Anne Boleyn, England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and the Monarch became the Supreme Governor. Although in the course of history both Church and State have been involved in offences against fundamental freedoms, and the cause at times of religious persecution and the source of intolerance, the established Church of England now acts as the guarantor of religious freedom for all in Britain.¹³

The Prime Minister David Cameron said in his 2011 speech commemorating the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible: "**We are a Christian country and we should not be afraid to say so.**" Jack Straw, the previous Labour Foreign Secretary stated in April 2014 that "Muslims should accept that Christianity permeates our sense of citizenship"¹⁴.

Law of the Land / Equality

English Common Law¹⁵ derives its moral force and guiding principles from the Bible, especially the Ten Commandments, and from Roman Law, and has been developed and refined over the centuries. English Common Law requires that "Any law is, or of right ought to be, according to the law of God."¹⁶

The rule of law and equality before the law is ingrained in the DNA of British born people, handed down from generation to generation, and perhaps one of the reasons why many of the judgements of the European Court of Justice, and of the European Court of Human Rights, "jar" so profoundly- especially with Conservatives. Britain is a very law-abiding country and has deep respect for the law and the principle of impartial enforcement. The concepts of the common law and fair trial before a jury of fellow peers run through the veins of the nation.

11 See Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of England*.

12 Bristol, Canterbury, Carlisle, Chester, Chichester, Durham, Ely, Exeter, Gloucester, Hereford, Lichfield, Lincoln, Manchester, Norwich, Oxford, Peterborough, Ripon, Rochester, St Albans, Salisbury. Southwark, Southwell, Wells, Winchester, Worcester, and York.

13 The Queen's speech at Lambeth Palace in February 2012.

14 *Daily Telegraph*, 21 April 2014

15 Definition of Common law: Law developed in the course of time from the rulings of judges, as opposed to law embodied in statutes passed by legislatures (statutory law).

16 Stephen C. Perks, *Christianity and Law: The Influence of Christianity on the Development of English Common Law* (Taunton: Kuyper Foundation, 2012), 11, 64, quoting a year book from the reign of Henry VII.

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Work ethic

The flourishing Protestant movement of Northern Europe was a major factor in producing the strong work ethic and 'rugged individualism' from which came the intellectual curiosity, imagination, creativity and engineering ingenuity which in turn gave rise to the Industrial Revolution of the 1700s and helped to propel Britain into its place as a world economic power. The Enlightenment, particularly its Scottish expression (including among others the influence of Hume, Smith, Adam, Ferguson, and in England Burke, Fox, and Paine), contributed reason, the scientific evidential method, the suspicion of unquestioned tradition, respect for the value and autonomy of the individual, a concept of fairness and a degree of diversity. The religious framework of the reformation enabled these qualities to thrive, as the Protestant faith contributed to the shaping of culture. Out of this process emerged the beginning of the 'modern world we recognise today'.

Anglo-Saxon Capitalism / Need for ethics in business

Anglo Saxon Capitalism developed out of trading relationships built up over the centuries.¹⁷ "Capitalism as we have historically had it in the West requires moral and legal and predictability, honesty in commercial dealings and a justice system that can be relied upon to deal with dishonesty and injustice".¹⁸ However unbridled self-interest can lead to greed, which in an uncontrolled environment leads to unacceptable behaviour, as shown in the recent financial crisis. Commerce works best when both parties are happy with the transaction and great companies generate "Goodwill" with their customers and are therefore successful. British values in a business sense were embodied in the phrase: "My word is my bond": honesty and integrity are essential ingredients in creating an effective trading and commercial environment. We understand that Britain is one of only five nations (the others much smaller) which has never defaulted on its national debt. My word is my bond indeed, a real British Value.

Sport/ Concept of Fair play and support for the under-dog

Britain since the mid 1700s has been at the forefront of the development of, and participation in, all sports, and was indeed responsible for the creation of many sports, especially team ball games, such as cricket, football, rugby, and hockey, as well as golf, tennis and squash. Much more importantly it codified the rules and etiquette embodied 'in the spirit of the game', such as following the rules, fair play, good sportsmanship, consideration of one's opponent, and support for the underdog. This British concept of sport was that it is possible to be both earnest and relaxed, to be serious and to have fun, to work hard and to enjoy. Games and sport were seen to teach discipline, fair play, and team work and to channel positively the energy and aggression of young men. Thus in Britain, discipline does not lead to totalitarianism or authoritarianism. These imbued values and the pleasures derived therefrom became part and parcel of a British way of life for many. The concept of "fair play" and "playing the game" in the view of many from overseas was considered a core British characteristic/value.

17 The Crown from the 1100's granted regulated Charters to Ancient Guilds and Livery Companies of London and Merchant Adventurers of York, Bristol, Coventry etc. to transact business through barter and exchange of gold and silver for the mutual benefit of both parties to a transaction. Self-interest was regulated and controlled, and balanced with the common good and mutual reciprocity. Joint Stock Companies were introduced from the 1600's and Limited Liability Companies in the late 1800's.

18 Stephen Perks in private correspondence.

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Immigration / Multiculturalism

Britain has, since the seventeenth century, been open to immigration, taking in those of many ethnicities and faiths. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been major immigration from Commonwealth countries in Africa, West Indies, and South Asia and more recently a major inflow from Eastern Europe. Normally within one generation these economically active immigrants or refugees have been successfully integrated into local communities and adopted the habits and customs of the locals. However, for whatever reason, some second and third generation British immigrants seem to feel less “comfortable” with their sense of Britishness than their parents and grandparents.

The policy of multiculturalism (to the detriment of an over arching sense of British values and culture), introduced in an attempt to address this, failed precisely because it was an arbitrary, artificial, externally imposed construct rather than a warm welcome into a thriving British society and encouragement to embrace Britishness. A deliberate multicultural policy was bound to produce the tension we now have. But the issue is often incorrectly perceived as a racial problem. This was tragically shown by the Rotherham child care scandal which highlights the law of unintended consequences when confusing culture with race, and was brilliantly articulated in Sarah Vine’s Saturday essay in the Daily Mail on 7th February 2015. The problem is not people coming to our country, it is the overturning of the fundamental principles underpinning our culture, which the secular humanist establishment has been undermining for a long time. As a result we have inadequate cultural defences.

Europe/ Sovereignty

The UK joined the EEC trading block of 6 in 1973 at a point of economic weakness, and thereby had to make many concessions. Many Britons are discomfited now to find themselves one of 28 countries of the EU, with many sovereign powers having been transferred to the EU without consultation with the British people. The British people consider the EEC/EU to be a transactional relationship and not a political union. Furthermore, the major influx of immigration from the EU (well in excess of forecast planning) within the last ten years has increased pressure on community services and impacted the job market. A full and frank nationwide debate is required over the benefits or otherwise for remaining within the political EU, as compared to an economic trading union.

Our Values Today

The dynamic modernity of Britain has developed because of who we are as a nation. For over 400 years, Britain has been in the forefront of the sciences, medicine, the arts, music, maritime technology, the industrial revolution and in creating the internet. Our creativity and productivity means that we have always been at the cutting edge of discovery and innovation. On social justice issues it led the way with initially Poor Laws 1601 (forerunner of Social Security and the welfare state), the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of women, universal education, social welfare and a national health service.

Such developments came from key British political and cultural values such as the value and freedom of the individual, respect for and obedience to the rule of law, freedom of expression and of conscience, religious tolerance, universal suffrage, loyalty to Queen and Country, a free press, respect for the rights of others, and allegiance and loyalty to Institutions; and from key British social and personal values such as tolerance, patience, determination, integrity, humility, courage, loyalty, duty, comradeship, constancy, and consideration for others. In addition, the British are imbued with a spirit of independence, perhaps even stubbornness and a high degree of scepticism as to the wisdom of those who govern us.

The British understand that government should have a limited role and this chimes with a key conservative philosophy of limited government or small state. A small state depends on a strong society, and to date strong societies have always recognised that the optimum environment for raising children rests upon the institution of marriage, as stated on the main stage by Theresa May at the 2004 Party Conference, in her role as the Shadow Secretary of State for the Family.

The secular movements' undermining of the UK's religious heritage in recent years threatens that which we believe the silent majority most cherish. Yet the current debate about 'British values' shows that we have a poor understanding of why this is so. Six key points are pertinent here:

1. Values need to rest on something.

Any list of 'British values' is a list of 'second-order' concepts. What must come first and underpin them is a coherent worldview.

2. Values are about people.

This debate concerns the values of society: government, family, community. It is all about people. So, why should we value a person? The key Christian insight is that humanity is created in the image of God, who has inherent value, who is the source of value. Furthermore, people are valued by God, so we should value ourselves and each other. Everything else flows from that.

3. Freedom of choice is key.

The Biblical narrative presents freedom of choice as God-given and requires us to bear the consequences of our choice; yet, like any loving parent, God also intervenes to stop us destroying ourselves. This is the foundation of the concept of personal responsibility and of mercy, which underpins our system of justice and the welfare state itself.

4. Government and church have different roles

It is the role of government to ensure freedom of choice. It is the role of the Church to extend the invitation to a relationship with God. One should not, one cannot compel anyone to believe anything. Failure to comprehend this lies behind the 12th Century Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, ISIS, secular aggression or indeed any totalitarian system.

5. British Values rest upon a specific world view

The above worldview explains why people have value, and why freedom is essential. It is this which underpins our Western civilisation's freedom to practice any religion, or none. It is this which underpins a healthy and tolerant society. If we are to continue to enjoy the values which we have inherited, then this must surely be respected by government.

6. United States Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence, framed by people who were British subjects at the time, sets out a clear world view: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

5. FUTURE POLICY IMPLICATIONS

POLITICIANS DO NOT CREATE VALUES

How are we to create a culture in our schools and homes that nurtures these positive values? Secularism and, to a lesser extent, Pluralism provide shaky foundations on which to build.

Schools play an important part in teaching “values” (especially the difference between right and wrong behaviour, and respect for people so that there is certainly no bullying of any kind). However, value and especially belief systems are primarily handed down from generation to generation via mother and father to daughter and son; it becomes embedded in their moral DNA. Individuals develop these values and ethos over time; and it starts from a very young age.

The question of how values are imbued is the question of how a human being becomes a person. Personhood primarily relates to the capacity for love, friendship, significance, and recognition. Parents provide their children with their first experience of these, through their approval and disapproval as well as setting an example of acceptable moral and social behaviour.

... but their policies have undermined deeply held values

It is considered by many that the more vocal secularists, and possibly the so-called ‘gay lobby’, representing less than say 2% of the population, are having a disproportionate effect on this debate. The rush to legislate for 'same-sex marriage' with no mandate or manifesto pledge, has undermined traditional values of family, parents and marriage, the absolute bedrock of society, and created a space where people who disagree with it can be freely vilified and stigmatized. The flawed consultation process¹⁹ was all rather intolerant and very un-British ('the new Intolerance') and the whole affair remains a politically toxic issue for the Conservative Party. Most ethnic groups do not comprehend why this “politically correct” legislation was introduced. The introduction of a conscience clause would be in line with our valued British freedoms of tolerance and respect for those who dissent.

Politicians should not just impose “new” values

As religion is progressively relegated to the private sphere and deemed by many politicians to be irrelevant or even dangerous in public life, new values are taking over: autonomy, equality and rights. The danger is that where anything goes / “do what you please”²⁰, anarchy emerges (remember Russell Brand) and then, for the nation to function at all, a value system has to be imposed.

Hitherto in Britain, the shared inheritance of Christianity has provided a clear national identity, a unifying national story, and a shared definition of the common good. This unifying story, which repudiated the need to enquire into men's souls, is now being replaced by those who wish to impose a moral uniformity to create social cohesion and control, which brooks no benign dissent. For example they refused to allow conscience clauses for the benefit on teachers, registrars, clergy and those who hold dear marriage only between a man and a woman, and are now imposing on schools, bypassing their governors and teachers, without prior debate and agreement, their own 'new morality.'

19 Had the views of over 500,000 people who signed the Coalition for Marriage (C4M) petition been included in the consultation process as promised, the outcome would have been 84% against the legislation. This differs from the government report of 52% in favour. Further, a ComRes poll before the SSM Bill found that 20% of those who voted Conservative in 2010 stated that they definitely would not do so in 2015 if SSM became law. The Conservative Party polled 10.7 million votes in 2010. 20% of this is 2.1 million...

20 David Cameron, Bible Speech, Oxford 2011

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The imposition of distorted British values can only work because many of the population do not have knowledge and understanding of their history. In truth it is virtually impossible, and perhaps an oxymoron, to impose politically inspired compulsory British values, a rather un-British concept. Social engineering for political purposes without a clear mandate and public debate, is not the British way. Individuals need to “buy into” values, and it is up to politicians and leaders to lead by example, not diktat. A nationwide debate is long overdue.

... but we do need politicians to nurture respect for existing values

What politicians tend to refer to as values are actually (their) preferences. They are often determined by opinion polls and focus groups. Values have a reference to an absolute norm, whether acknowledged or not. We need policies that enable “agreed” British values to flourish rather than certain new policies that only express preferential choices of sector groupings with “agendas”.

Mrs Thatcher, in a speech in 1988 stated, “The Christian religion, which embodies many of the great spiritual and moral truths of Judaism, is a fundamental part of our national heritage. And I believe it is the wish of the overwhelming majority of people that this heritage should be preserved and fostered. **For centuries it has been our very life blood**”.

Without them, we lose our identity

Since Mrs Thatcher left office as PM in 1990, politicians, especially in Britain over the last couple of decades have, for whatever reason, become very hesitant and apprehensive about talking about religion or faith in the public square. Even those MPs with a strong faith are perhaps encouraged to refrain from saying what they believe in, in public. Perhaps because of this, the country has unwittingly drifted towards becoming more secular, thereby losing some sense of values and identity. As we have lost touch with our roots, a moral vacuum to some degree has emerged which regretfully provides fertile soil to some for a growing contempt and hostility towards our [lack of] values.²¹

We are now paying the price. A discussion of “values” becomes impossible without exploring what 'belief systems' really means. Once/if a country stops believing in anything spiritual, then it is highly likely that others will move into that space to the probable detriment of all. To quote David Holloway “if good aims are being held that are no longer backed up by society's current beliefs, you sooner or later have spiritual, moral, social and cultural decay... such societies are ripe for various forms of totalitarianism to bring about social order, whether secular fascist or religious jihadist”.²²

21 Dr Patrick Sookhdeo in *Global Jihad* writes about specific grievances of radical Islamists sharing a common hostility to Western influences, which they blame for the corruption of all that is good in the world: for encouraging the “evils” of secularism, atheism, alcohol, drugs, sexual permissiveness, family breakdown, globalisation, capitalism, secularism, materialism and consumerism. The West does need to re-examine these issues, consider appropriate modification and thereby weaken or even eliminate such criticism. In its recent headlong pursuit of a consumer society, Britain has risked losing its “heart and soul”. It is always dangerous to create or have a “void”, which can be filled with undesirable consequences.

22 David Holloway, “British Values”, Society and Public Life, Jan 2015.

<://printandaudio.org.uk/app/explore/resources/type/articles-formerly-coloured-supplements/series/183/resource/2695/title/british-values>

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And our freedom

Ofsted has set up a norm of 'life in modern Britain' to which primary school children must be educated. This has neither been discussed nor agreed beforehand. It conflicts at key points with religious teaching, Conservative principles and what many consider to be British values. Surely the loyalty and allegiance of these schools to "Queen and Country" which was the fundamental worry about Islamist extremism is not in doubt. As Rod Liddle wrote in the Sunday Times (Feb 1 2015) "There is no threat to our society from Jewish schools, or CofE or Catholic schools. The claims of equivalence are odious and promulgated by the deluded or the disingenuous."

The Education Secretary now talks about conformity "to those very simple, universal, liberal British values". British values surely do not include the requirement that primary school children know what lesbians do. Education is about teaching people to think for themselves and holding up before them the best that humanity knows and aspires to. It does not include exposure at a very young age to what many people, including their own parents, count as at the very least questionable.

It was thought that a guiding principle of liberalism was respect for and tolerance of the "other" but it is increasingly being seen to be disrespectful and intolerant of those with whom it disagrees. This surely is antithetical to our fundamental values. When we cease to tolerate benign dissent, we cease to act in accordance with the grand harmony of British history: indeed, we cease to be British. Being British involves tolerance of conflicting philosophies, mutually exclusive theologies and illogicality. But not at any price.

The understanding that the rights and freedom of man come not from the generous provision of the State but from our Creator (as in the Declaration of Independence) provides the vital underpinning for these traditional and long held values. Note for example the success and growing popularity of Church of England and Roman Catholic schools, and that so many wish to send their children to school there. In sharp contrast, certain Islamic schools have to date approached the matter of values rather differently. There should not be a blanket policy for 'all faiths' without discernment of the differences between the faiths and their underlying approach to broadly accepted British values.

OUR VALUES: OUR WAY OF LIFE

As a nation we need to embrace the Muslim community much more into the mainstream of British society; but as a "quid pro quo" they too need progressively to embrace us and Britain as their home and identity, and British values within their way of life and culture so that they are not conflicting. British Muslim integration and inclusion in British public life is essential for cohesion. The non-native population gradually needs to adjust and adapt to the local way of life in the country they have come to, and not the other way around: 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do'. A segregated society leads to suspicion and disharmony and a feeling of being deprived and marginalized. The response from some to Eric Pickles recent letter sent to UK Imams, following the Paris atrocities, was of concern. To paraphrase David Cameron "if [they] have a problem with Eric's letter, then they do have a problem."

A failure to understand, and defeat, the strategic imperative of radical Islamism, would be on a par to the nation not tackling communism, fascism and nazism. It would also inculcate fear amongst more liberal and western Muslims of embracing this country more fully and proudly, which many have made a great effort to do. We now need to determine strategies to both isolate and then eliminate radical Islamism from Britain, which is anathema to our culture.

Moderate members of the UK Muslim community need encouragement from all of us to speak up and isolate themselves from radical Islamists within the country and to stop their young from coming under such influence. There must be no Islamic enclaves or no-go areas in Britain which would give rise to an Islamic apartheid. That in itself is very un-British and must surely not be tolerated. The Government needs much more clarity on this point and it was interesting to note what Sajid Javid recently said on the subject,²³ and Husain Haqqani,²⁴ ex Pakistan Ambassador to the USA.

If we wish to halt the radicalisation of young Muslims, every effort must be made, especially in their schools, to imbue them with a sense of what being British means: the values, culture and ethos, within which we all abide as Prince Charles recently articulated ²⁵ with a comprehensive knowledge of the history and development of the country and the reason we are as we are. We must abandon this concept of 'unilateral tolerance' and insist on the acceptance and affirmation of shared British values based on the traditions and culture of Britain.

While our enshrined religious freedoms protect the distinct expressions of every religion and worldview, it is our common and shared British values which bind us together as a nation and which provide cohesion for the functioning of our society. This enables each of us to make valuable contributions to our country regardless of colour or creed.

6. CONCLUSION

Proud of our Past – Forging our Future

Britain is a great nation with a great past and which has the potential to forge a great future. British values cannot simply be invented as we go along but are indisputably deeply rooted in our history and our Judaeo-Christian heritage. It is *these specific as well as general* values which will enable us to give our young people a solid basis for their idealism, combat Islamic extremism at source, and equip the Conservative Party to win the coming election and best serve the good of the nation.

Let us have a full, frank and open debate, so that the whole nation can agree on what is really meant by British Values.

Grassroots conservatives

March 2015

23 Guardian, January 11th

24 Daily Telegraph, January 13th

25 Prince Charles February 7th

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Appendix 1

VALUES

The characteristics of our British national identity

We affirm the fundamental British Values of *democracy, rule of law, equality of every human being before the law, freedom of speech and the rights of all men and women to live free from persecution.*

We affirm as a matter of principle and of historical record that these values originate from Judaeo-Christian belief, thought and practice, which has been foundational in these islands. As such these values have been recognised worldwide as defining our national identity.

The central value in British history and culture, derived from our Judaeo-Christian foundations, is that every human being is created by God of infinite worth and with unique purpose and destiny. Therefore, every man, woman and child is entitled to respect, care, consideration and protection.

Our values, relating to our personal and corporate life, are given substance, and first learned in the family, the original and enduring building block of our society, where mother and father are duly honoured as the primary educators.

Our values embrace respect for the rule of law and equality of all before the law, together with freedom of speech, debate, conscience and religion. Equity has a long and illustrious pedigree for which the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta is a timely reminder.

Our values embrace the utmost respect for human life and the wellbeing of others, compassion and care for the vulnerable, hospitality and mutual interdependence.

Our values derive from the belief that we are all responsible and accountable for our actions, recognising that there are consequences to all that we say and do. Our values encourage every person to seek the common good over and above personal gain, never insisting on our human rights at the expense of our social responsibilities.

Our values are evidenced in mutual trust, truthfulness and integrity. Our word is our bond within all relationships from the home to the marketplace, in civil society and in government. These are complemented by the attitudes of courtesy, compassion and modesty.

Our values applaud and encourage the virtues of commitment to hard work, steadfastness and reliability, in addition to consideration towards the feelings of others.

British history clearly authenticates the role and benefits of Christian teaching and practice. This is evidenced in the struggles to establish the rule of law and to defeat slavery and the slave trade; the establishment of the rights of conscience and the consistent opposition to intimidation, coercion, corruption, tyranny and oppression; the founding of numerous

charitable institutions and the upholding of human dignity through the provision of education, health care and welfare.

The essential recognition of the spiritual dimension of life provides the clear principles that lead to the honouring of others irrespective of their personal beliefs.

These values bring hope for all people because they reflect the character of the Creator and the created order. We seek actively to promote these values now as fundamental to the health of our national life and to teach and transmit to future generations their validity and their origin in the Judaeo-Christian foundations of our culture.

We call upon people of all faiths and none to subscribe to these values and to affirm and confirm them in daily life, general profession, teaching, and government.

October 2014

Drafted in the House of Lords at a meeting of 22 Christian leaders from different traditions

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RESOURCES on which this paper has drawn are as follows:

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A SELECTION OF PERTINENT QUOTATIONS²⁶

VALUES

'The great question is to discover, not what governments prescribe, but what they ought to prescribe; for no prescription is valid against the conscience of mankind.'

Lord Acton, *History of Freedom & Other Essays* 1907

'Conservatism... is based on the belief that the social order rests upon a moral base, and that what ties us together as a people... is in constant need of support'.

William Bennett, *The Devaluing of America* 1992

'Put simply, for too long, we have been unwilling to distinguish right from wrong. 'Live and let live' has too often become 'do what you please'. Bad choices have too often been defended as just different lifestyle.'

David Cameron, 'King James Bible' speech, Oxford, 2011

'Previous civilisations have been overthrown from without by the incursion of barbarian hordes; ours has dreamed up its own dissolution in the minds of its own intellectual elite... Liberalism will be seen historically as the great destructive force of our time...'

Malcolm Muggeridge, *Things Past* 1978

'There is another threat which is more subtle and more deadly and that is the collapse into a society which is neither Communist nor Conservative, but is simply valueless – an amoral rootless society, indifferent to the spiritual, contemptuous of the arts, in which pornography not religion, would be the opium of the people, and the horrors of the 'Clockwork Orange' society would be translated from fiction to reality. There is only one answer to that: we have to revivify and renew moral and religious education in our schools.'

Norman St John Stevas, 1977

'The traditional attitudes and ideas of Western culture form, so to speak, the thesis; while liberalism constitutes the antithesis, the negative images. Thus, from the liberal perspective, most traditional virtues become negative qualities.'

Jeffrey Peter Hart, *Acts of Recovery* 1989

'It is no use the Muslim Council of Great Britain endlessly saying that 'the problem is not Islam', when it is blindingly obvious that in far too many mosques you find sermons of hate, and literature glorifying 9/11 and vilifying Jews.'

Boris Johnson, *Daily Telegraph*, 14 July 2005

'I was brought up by a Victorian grandmother. We were taught to work jolly hard. We were taught to prove yourself; we were taught self-reliance; we were taught to live within our income... You were taught self-respect. You were taught always to give a hand to your neighbour. You were taught tremendous pride in your country. All of these things are Victorian values. They are also perennial values. You don't hear so much about these things these days, but they were good values and they led to tremendous improvements in the standard of living.'

Margaret Thatcher, LBC Radio, April 1983

²⁶ All taken from *The Dictionary of Conservative Quotations*. (ed. Iain Dale; London: Biteback Publishing Ltd, 2013)

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'In the age of materialism we stand for value. In an age of selfishness we believe in service. In an age of sectional interests we still uphold the flag of patriotism, honour, family, courage, integrity and self-sacrifice. We do not equate permissiveness with civilised behaviour. We will neither permit ourselves, nor encourage others to overstep the bounds of conscience, morality and the law. It is because we are the party of freedom that we are also the party of the law.'

Attributed to Margaret Thatcher

'Unless we change our ways and our direction, our greatness as a nation will soon be a footnote in the history books, a distant memory of an offshore island, lost in the mist of time like Camelot, remembered kindly for its noble past.'

Margaret Thatcher, 2 May 1979

BRITISH

'I say to the people of Britain: if you believe that our country is unique in the world but is in danger of losing its identity; if you believe that Britain is a place where you should be rewarded for doing the right things, but now you are penalised for it; if you believe in Britain as a healthy democracy, but that the standards of democracy are now being tarnished and diminished; if you believe in Britain as a country where law is enforced and respected, but that now it is not respected enough; if you believe in Britain as a country that will work with its neighbours but never submit to being governed by anyone else; if you believe in an independent Britain, then come with me and I will give you back your country.'

William Hague, Conservative Party Conference, 7 October 1999

'A battle of ideas has commenced over the value of nation in the modern world. This Party will not be found wanting. This country has such great strengths. Our traditions. Our institutions. Our values. The instincts of our people. The Conservative Party trusts in these things and we will protect these things. We always have and we always will.'

William Hague, Conservative Party Conference, 7 October 1999

Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.'

David Cameron, Speech at Munich Security Conference, 2011

'I want to see a Britain that is utterly blind to race or colour – that celebrates difference but that celebrates Britishness, too. And, let's face it, in recent years we haven't celebrated it enough.'

David Davis leadership contender speech, 2005

CONSERVATISM

'The basic premise of conservatism is that worthwhile institutions are hard to build, and easy to destroy, and that a life without institutions is seriously impoverished.'

Roger Scruton, *The Times*, 1983

'The idea of social justice on which the welfare state is founded – where social justice is supposed to be something other than charity, a right of the recipient rather than a virtue of the one who gives – seems to sponsor and condone a corruption of the moral sense... to move precisely away from the Conservative conception of authoritative and personal government, towards a labyrinthine, privilege sodden structure of anonymous power, nurturing a citizenship that is increasingly reluctant to answer for itself, increasingly void of personal responsibility, and increasingly parasitic on the dispensations of a bureaucracy towards which it feels no gratitude.'

Roger Scruton, *Conservative Texts*, 1991

'You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
You cannot help little men by tearing down big men.
You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.
You cannot further the brotherhood by encouraging class hatred.
You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.
You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn.
You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's independence and initiative.
You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.'

William J. H. Boetker, *The Ten Cannots*, 1916. Accredited to Abraham Lincoln.

'The fundamental role of government in a free society is to create a framework where the talents and abilities of the people can flourish. I remember once comparing this framework to another frame – the one which surrounds a picture. You need the frame, certainly: but it mustn't over-shadow the painting itself – for that's where the true worth really lies.'

Margaret Thatcher, Message to Chapman University Conference, 4 May 2002

FREEDOM

'Liberty not only means that the individual has both the opportunity and the burden of choice; it also means that he must bear the consequences of his actions... Liberty and responsibility are inseparable.'

Friedrich von Hayek, *Constitution of Liberty* 1960

Political correctness is, in essence, about power. It is someone telling someone else what to do, how to behave, how to speak, how to think.'

Michael Howard, speech in Stafford on 'political correctness', 26 August 2004

'The real bigots are those who believe that those who dissent have no right to do so, and that the state itself should silence them.'

Ann Widdecombe, On 'same-sex marriage', Conservative Party Conference 2012

'To compel a man to subsidise with his taxes the propagation of ideas which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical.'

Thomas Jefferson, *On 'Big Government'*

'Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.'

John Milton, *Areopagitica* 1644

PROUD OF THE PAST

'Let us contemplate our forefathers, and posterity, and resolve to maintain the rights bequeathed to us by the former, for the sake of the latter'.

Samuel Adams, 1771

'People will not look forwards to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors.'

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* 1790

'I am a Conservative because I am absolutely certain that no community in this world has ever flourished, or could ever flourish, if it was faithless to its own past'.

Attributed to Arthur Balfour

'Ours is a great nation and never in its history has it stood in higher repute in the world than today. Its greatness rests not on its material wealth, for that has been poured out in full measure, nor upon its armed might, which other nations surpass. It has its roots in the character, the ability and the independence of our people and the magic of this wonderful island. British virtues have been developed under the free institutions which our fathers and forefathers struggled through the centuries to win and to keep. We of this generation are trustees for posterity, and the duty lies upon us to hand down to our children unimpaired the unique heritage that was bequeathed to us.'

Conservative Party Manifesto, 1945

'Our history is the history of a free people – a great chain of people stretching back into the past and forward into the future.'

Margaret Thatcher, *The Challenge of Our Times* 1983

FORGING OUR FUTURE

'The year ahead will be great ones for our country, for the cause of freedom and the spread of civilisation.'

Ronald Reagan, *Notre Dame University*, 17 May 1981

'Conservatism... is based on the belief that the social order rests upon a moral base, and that what ties us together as a people... is in constant need of support'.

William Bennett, *The Devaluing of America* (1992)

'The basic premise of conservatism is that worthwhile institutions are hard to build, and easy to destroy, and that a life without institutions is seriously impoverished.'

Roger Scruton, *The Times*, 1983