



# On Martial Values and Britishness

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## Shaking the Pyramid

Back in 2008, the now Foreign Secretary William Hague assured the US that he, “David Cameron and George Osborne were ‘children of Thatcher’ and staunch Atlanticists”.<sup>1</sup> Hague said while he recognised this was at odds with British public opinion, politicians “sit at the top of the pyramid”.<sup>2</sup> This autocratic approach extends beyond foreign policy and, it seems, among those being ‘sat on’ at the bottom are thousands of people who rioted in England last August, 2011. These disturbances were ultimately seen to result from marginalisation and resentment felt in communities experiencing joblessness and aggressive policing.<sup>3</sup> 66% of those charged with related offences were from neighbourhoods that got poorer between 2007 and 2010.<sup>4</sup>

It is perhaps unsurprising that the Tories are feeling their pyramid rather unstable. Worsening economic deprivation and lack of opportunity are the foundations of young people’s alienation in Britain, paucities exacerbated by policy measures including, but not limited to, the scrapping of Education Maintenance Allowances; the arbitrary suspensions of benefits<sup>5</sup>; and ‘workfare’ programmes demanding the free labour of benefit recipients in return for their continued state welfare provisions.<sup>6</sup> Two years into Coalition government, PM Cameron’s brand of Thatcherite<sup>7</sup> ‘there is no alternative’ government has had quite the impact. And yet somewhat ironically, the government diagnose the resulting riots as symptomatic of behavioural issues, weak morality, poor schooling<sup>8</sup>, criminality and gangs.<sup>9</sup>

Autocratic martial values and a deepening militarisation of state and civil society are the mortars used in an attempt to patch-up the now-Tory pyramid – a neoliberal system of governance, after all, spanning all the dominant political parties. Michael Gove, the Education Secretary, is currently polarising the population into a “hard-working majority” and a “vicious, lawless, immoral minority” – reconstructing the problem of the riots as one of *culture*, rather than one of inequality and unbounded capitalism.<sup>10</sup> In so doing he appeals to a fear and populism that turns humanity against itself, instead of against government policies. As the theorist Slavoj Žižek argues “the cause of the troubles is ultimately never the system as such, but the intruder who corrupted it (financial manipulators, not capitalists as such, etc.); not a fatal flaw inscribed into the structure as such, but an element that doesn’t play its role within the structure properly”.<sup>11</sup> Following Žižek’s analysis, and in this case: the rioters. The lack of real media debate during the period allowed the favoured

of moral panic to prevail; fuelling a reactionary thrust of public anger used to justify the continuity of significant state restructuring. One petition calling for rioters’ benefits to be revoked gained at least 60,000 signatures in the 24 hours after the riots.<sup>12</sup> Such malice and demagoguery may be startling, but isn’t all that new. Successive governments have emphasised vigilance to threats at home and abroad, creating scapegoats to distract from domestic and foreign policy and drum up support. The solution to Gove’s redefined problem is now, as before, being presented to the public as a return to old-fashioned discipline and martial values, starting with the ‘moral decay’ of the imagined nation’s amassed children.



## Discipline the Youth

‘Citizenship’ has been securing the foundations of this pyramid in schools in England since 2002. These compulsory classes set out to nurture cohesion through socialisation, implicitly minimising any questioning of societies’ institutions. That pupils *did* gain a more complex understanding of contemporary laws and political systems from such classes is something clearly undesirable to the Coalition. In favour of more subtly-integrated propaganda delivered through history teaching Gove’s curriculum review has scrapped these compulsory classes. Gove has said the emphasis will now be on “our island story”, the value of ‘Britishness’, national pride and cohesion.<sup>13</sup> It’s the return of the ‘Kings and Queens’ approach, the rote boredom of yesteryear. Under advice from ‘Better History Group’ think-tank and ‘history tsar’, Simon Schama, British-centred history will strengthen our “national memory”.<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere Gove’s policies have been criticised by Cambridge History Professor, Richard Evans, who said they would deliver “self-congratulatory narrow myths of history” to schoolchildren.<sup>15</sup> Quintessentially English myths of ‘Britishness’ on which martial values can be better built.

Coalition plans sunk lower still in August, when Cameron announced his goal to militarise schools in England and Wales. Initiating a wider project for 10 state-run military academies, the ‘Phoenix’ school opens in September 2013.<sup>16</sup> Conservative Party think-tank ResPublica recommended “a chain of academies sponsored by the Armed Forces” and “using their practical experience and existing governance support”.<sup>17</sup> They will institutionalise militarism; the schools will be entirely operated using ex-military personnel, or ‘civilian teachers’ “recruited with an intention of joining the Reserves”. The priority will be for ‘vertical grouping’ of children. This will instill a

hierarchy with lower-ability children held back in lower grades regardless of increasing age; a demoralising teaching structure that reflects the pyramid society itself, ensuring children become familiar with their place in its structure.<sup>18</sup> ResPublica calls the schools a MoD and DfE “partnership in the delivery of education”.<sup>19</sup> This despite criticism during MoD governance of privatisations (QinetiQ was undervalued leading to massive profits for its executives<sup>20</sup> and losses for the public).<sup>21</sup> The Phoenix school’s ‘zero-tolerance’ approach is presented as a direct response to the riots, seeking to halt ‘indiscipline’, instilling martial values such as “self-discipline, respect and an ability to listen”.<sup>22</sup> Unmentioned goes the need to develop enquiring minds. The initiative is directed at those in poverty, and claims to be “tackling disadvantage” and “social ills”.<sup>23</sup> Effectively, it seeks to mould the poor and oppressed into a more compliant population. The question remains, what ‘opportunities’ will be offered to young people in disadvantaged areas, many of whom already see few choices beyond ‘economic conscription’ into the military? – the creation of another captive market for the privateers.

Increasing authoritarian discipline is in reality a political trajectory of the last few decades. *The Guardian* criticised the harsh policies of New Labour and its “immediate predecessors”, revealing that “between 1992 and 2001, the number of children being jailed every year soared by 90% [...] The number of children under 15 sent to custody increased by 800%” and despite “around 80%” of these having “at least two mental disorders”, this course continued.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the sort of ‘preventative’ repression we’re now seeing actually began under Labour, when they announced that through surveillance they could predict which children would become criminals.<sup>25</sup> Since 2004, police have added the DNA of children over 10 to a database identifying





those 'at-risk' of becoming criminals with 87,459 samples taken from 10-16 year olds in 2005-2006 alone, and the DNA of 24,000 youngsters aged 10-18 who had not even been convicted of an offence remaining held in 2010.<sup>26</sup> Hundreds of these young people were arrested in Camden, only for it to be revealed in 2009 that police were arresting these young people, who had committed no crime, just to get them on the database. The purpose of this blatant harassment was said to be to deter future crime, and to make it easier to catch them if they did do something.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, Camden and Tottenham were areas in which the riots kicked off, in part triggered by increasingly oppressive policing. Phoenix School head-teacher, Captain Affan Burki, told *The Telegraph*, without intended irony, that "All the old remedies for poverty, underachievement and alienation have been tested to destruction. The consequences were starkly before us on the streets of Tottenham and Croydon".<sup>28</sup> And the subsequent Government response? A military approach to educational discipline (Camden was flagged as a priority military academy location<sup>29</sup>), nationwide surveillance and still more aggressive policing.

In fact, Burki argues that Army discipline, integrated into teaching, will instil "selfless commitment".<sup>30</sup> Upping the pressure, Michael Gove recently scrapped the requirement for teachers in England to record all instances of 'physical restraint', and effectively welcomed harsher disciplinary measures in all schools.<sup>31</sup> He's keen to be seen as deploying discipline in and out of schools across England; extending headteachers' powers to punish children for any public misdemeanour, and employing former-military male personnel as 'mentors'.<sup>32</sup> Conceivably, Gove needs to explain why "former soldiers and military personnel are the highest single former occupational group serving sentences in British prisons"<sup>33</sup>? And also, to explain whether these troubling statistics are part of the reason why this growing former occupational group are securing

preferential state-backed employment at the expense of existing professional teachers?

After the public was, and continues to be, repeatedly lied to about consecutive illegal invasions and occupations – from the Balkans to Iraq, from Afghanistan to Libya – why are we allowing this government to further embed the military into our lives, our schools and our culture with such little resistance? They argue it is positive to instil the culture of the military in our children. But, according to a former Army Officer, the culture nurtured within the British Armed Forces holds that "they are good at Colonial warfare, [...] at turning out in Nyasaland, talking to the Chiefs, getting the natives in line, lining people up with a picture of Queen Victoria, and giving them all a Martini-Henry rifle".<sup>34</sup> This was reflected in the conduct of British Officers in Iraq. Human rights lawyer Phil Shiner claims British abuse of Iraqis could not be dismissed as "one-offs" but was "colonial savagery" reflective of a wider systemic problem.<sup>35</sup> It is a problem in the way Britain is constructed and propagandised, at home and abroad, as a nation. Eminent US critic of the militarisation of education, Henry A. Giroux argues that, "as an educational force, military power produces identities, goods, institutions, knowledge, modes of communication and affective investments – in short, it now bears down on all aspects of social life and the social order."<sup>36</sup> The fabrication of the British pyramid is being reinforced through intimidation or force, and the intended and unintended impacts of this across our whole culture cannot be underestimated.

#### Police at War

After the London riots, Affan Burki claimed that, "...before we put troops on the streets we should consider putting them in our schools" – yet, militarisation does not stop at the pyramid's foundations.<sup>37</sup> The attempt to insert martial values into the psychology of how public space is to function as a site for political encounter is reinforced by the militarisation of domestic policing and harsh social control methods on streets throughout the UK. Images of police 'kettling' protesters (including children and young people) in 2010 and charging at students resisting education cuts shocked many.<sup>38</sup> And yet the state-corporate media opted to rage at the (surely unsurprising) response of a group of protesters when a car carried flustered royals travelled through their midst, whilst the reporting of protesters trapped without food in horrendous conditions for 10 hours remained scant in comparison. Cameron, of course, called for the "full force" of law against the group (the individual now held to be collectively responsible<sup>39</sup>) and the police denied kettling contributed to the frustrated actions.<sup>40</sup> This supposedly 'violent' incident (only property was actually damaged) was used to distract public and media attention from actual *injuries* to 43 protestors – Alfie Meadows required brain surgery after being hit by a police baton.<sup>41</sup> Since the August 2011 riots, the focus of, and resistance to, government policies and imperatives has shifted from the social advancement appeals of young people wanting access to education, to the disenfranchised of our cities – even easier to dismiss as a "vicious lawless, immoral minority".<sup>42</sup> It was a smooth transition of narrative, barely noticed in our media, but we see the same rhetoric used to justify the extension of 'counter-terrorism' measures; ever-harsher actions against the new 'enemy to stability' in Britain.

It's not just rhetoric. 'Anti-Terror' legislation was used against protesters in England and Wales as early as 2003, with extended stop and search powers (ruled illegal by the European Court of Human Rights by 2010) used against protestors demonstrating outside an arms fair.<sup>43</sup> The Tories in opposition were posturing on ending state intrusion – Tony Blair's Labour government having created more than 3,000 new offences<sup>44</sup> – while the then Labour government's Policing and Security Minister, David Hanson, justified it saying: "Stop and search [...] is an important tool in a package of measures in the ongoing fight against terrorism."<sup>45</sup> Police have faced continued pressure to subdue public protests, while portraying them as a public threat. The tactic of 'kettling' "also attempts to incite the crowd".<sup>46</sup> The Coalition has taken a

lead in extending police powers further.<sup>47</sup> The media role has been crucial in framing protest to justify this build-up of domestic 'security measures', extending the rhetoric of 'terrorism' into their coverage of what are largely 'crimes against property', e.g. trespass (by refusing to leave a department store) which is being further criminalised. During the public sector cuts protest back in March 2011, one *Daily Mail* byline read "extremists hijack anti-government cuts demonstration" [my emphasis].<sup>48</sup> *The Mail* leapt on a group of protestors in "the Queen's Grocer" Fortnum and Mason, arguing they "terrorised staff and customers" [my emphasis], though 109 charges were dismissed by the Crown Prosecution Service.<sup>49</sup> *The Mail* of course doesn't mention that five months before this article, the police had already admitted misleading protesters into thinking they would let them leave Fortnum's peacefully, before detaining all 150 in custody (five minors were in cells overnight).<sup>50</sup> Less peaceful attacks on property came with the London riots in August and Cameron then promised to abandon restraint completely, "Whatever resources the police need they will get. Whatever tactics they feel they need they will have legal backing to do so."<sup>51</sup>

Eager attempts to bring in US 'zero-tolerance' expert William Bratton as Commissioner at London's Metropolitan Police followed.<sup>52</sup> There's been a gradual militarisation in approach with ministers saying (despite the debacle of the 'War on Terror'), that Army officers having served in Afghanistan should be fast-tracked into high-ranking police positions. Support for a Sandhurst-style police training college was also suggested, mixing former soldiers and intelligence officials with police in Theresa May's vision of a British FBI.<sup>53</sup> (A rolling out of Special Branch, British Army, and Security Services' actions in Northern Ireland more widely?) Then, in February 2012 the government ordered a police crackdown on protests and demonstrations against its controversial 'workfare' scheme. Police and intelligence are to further target "extreme left-wing activity".<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the media, particularly the BBC, are facing government attack for having voiced the concerns of those opposing workfare, and other authoritarian policies. Critics have been dismissed as "hard-left militants", echoing Thatcherite rhetoric.<sup>55</sup> Even critics, it seems, are the new *terrorists*. As the 'War on Terror' fades from dominant media memory, if not the day-to-day realities of millions across the globe, the 'War on Critics' escalates; the infrastructure of counter-terrorism becomes an infrastructure of counter-criticism, an anti-politics, and our streets and our culture are battlefields on which it's being fought.

In the wake of riots brought on in large part by massive austerity measures and oppressive policing, it is unsurprising the government has been jittery about the run up to the London Olympics. Militarisation strategies and martial values are strongly influencing Olympic planning. Philip Hammond MP promised us a "peaceful celebration of sporting achievement and a cultural celebration – not a security event".<sup>56</sup> It's depressing to observe that the Government's vision of 'cultural celebration' in London takes the form of an intimidating 13,500-strong uniformed military presence.<sup>57</sup> We are brazenly told there will be surface to air missiles, a large number of aircraft, and SAS units floating on the Thames ready to deploy.<sup>58</sup> In addition to pulling in what is, according to *The Guardian*, more uniformed military than deployed in Afghanistan, the Navy's largest ship will be based in Greenwich throughout the games, though it was 'accidentally' airbrushed from posters displayed throughout the London Underground network. Expectedly, *The Daily Mail* decried this as organisers ashamed of our "proud military history"<sup>59</sup> whereas this "history" as a carrier of martial values is being promoted at every opportunity, down to Tower of London-inspired Olympic uniforms.<sup>60</sup>

Unsurprisingly the FBI have stated that they have established a "close working relationship" with the UK's Olympic security.<sup>61</sup> Most reports put the FBI numbers at 500 agents, who may or may not be armed.<sup>62</sup> To a large extent heightened security is an attempt to justify responses to

public protest being portrayed as counter-terrorism in a domestic context. This all has a horrible resonance with the 2008 Olympic Games. The Chinese authorities similarly increased security and deployed its Navy during their hosting of the Games, also in fear of their own people's mass protests. The UK government similarly wants to prevent the Games being used as an opportunity for public protest, and it is prepared to do this through a demonstration of power. If anything, such measures would appear more likely to guarantee unrest.

Giroux argues that, "what appears new about the amplified militarization of the post-9/11 world is that it has become normalized, serving as a powerful educational force that shapes our lives, memories and daily experiences."<sup>63</sup> In one recent worrying development in militarisation, the government has been trying to exploit a loophole in the Chemical Weapons Convention to sanction the use of nerve-agents for "domestic law enforcement", or riot-control.<sup>64</sup> There was international criticism when, in 2002, 115 hostages died from a mystery gas used by Russian Special Forces to end the Moscow Theatre Siege.<sup>65</sup> But a group of neuroscientists, commissioned by the Royal Society, concluded that the UK Government's position on the use of "incapacitating chemical agents" for domestic use has been relaxed in recent years, allowing development of nerve-agents of the kind used during Russian sieges.<sup>66</sup> China has also been criticized for use of nerve agents against its own people and it is *terrifying* that the public are not more active in holding to account a UK government that would consider similar authoritarian tactics.<sup>67</sup> There is a degree of public complacency or 'selective inattention'<sup>68</sup>, one even tinged with imperial superiority, concerning the voyeurism of repression elsewhere – be it Tahrir or Tiananmen Square – and it not happening here. At times of emergent dissent a narrative of embattled continuity in taking a 'great nation' with a 'rich past' into the future is often engaged, and this is clearly being used today to reinforce the edifice of Cameron's pyramid, through an even more compliant culture.



### Contracting in Control

Beyond controlling mass unrest, there are political and commercial interests that benefit from criminalising dissent and manipulating fear. The rhetoric of an 'ethical foreign policy' and public fear were manipulated throughout the ongoing 'War on Terror' to make defence contracting at home and abroad seem acceptable; another part of normal governance. An 'ethical foreign policy' never emerges in reality, but it justifies martial values among our new generation, people raised in a country in a state of continuous war since before Desert Storm. Of course, Blair made 'liberal

interventions' in Sierra Leone and Kosovo. The UK leadership continues to use this international role to maintain its interests and power on the world stage (with Blair's ongoing prominent involvement). Actually, the UK Government has been repeatedly criticised for unethical policies; in its dealings with China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Libya, amongst others.<sup>69</sup> After Robin Cook said Labour would build an 'ethical' foreign policy, the Foreign Office scrambled to cover themselves; its then minister Peter Hain said "we don't live in an ethical world" and it was a "mistake" to allow "policy to be presented as if we could have perfection".<sup>70</sup> In 2011 the depth of Foreign Office involvement in UK citizens' torture in Guantanamo Bay was revealed.<sup>71</sup> But having normalised contracting in 'ethical interventions' abroad it was not hard to extend this practise back home, increasing private sector deployment for domestic 'interventions'. British experience in imperial policing, according to Cassidy, a major in the U.S. Army, has "made internal security the norm and conventional war the exception" for Britain, and 'creating stability within' has long been seen as a crucial part of British security strategy.<sup>72</sup> This is a permanent war in which Britain is engaged. It invokes a climate of fear in which martial values are seen as 'of value to the nation', our culture comes to emphasise security and conformity against 'political extremists' who dare to question. Terming it "the shock doctrine", Naomi Klein argues through numerous examples that the disorientation that follows natural and man-made crises has been systematically exploited for political and economic gain.<sup>73</sup> We're seeing an accelerating encroachment of the private sector (of its interest, narratives, and imperatives) into the area of public control (boosting private interests of politicians and their hangers-on). Indeed, former Conservative party treasurer Peter Cruddas recently showed that political influence is being sold to the highest bidder.<sup>74</sup> Offerings are made at the top of Cameron's pyramid to the gods of commerce, impoverishing the lives of those at its base, who still must respect its traditional command. The party of 'law and order' is now regularly caught being cavalier with its uneven application – a disdain that might be described as neo-feudalist.

Great swathes of British defence are moving into the hands of profit-seeking companies, including Trident. Despite criticism of Lockheed Martin's record managing large-scale U.S. public projects, it will lead a consortium responsible for missile "processing, handling and storage"; "radiological safety" and "nuclear emergency response".<sup>75</sup> AWE, its partner within the consortium, has been criticised on safety, and MSP Michael Russell has called the plans "foolhardy and reckless".<sup>76</sup> With other privatisations including explosives, ammunitions, small arms, air search and rescue, aircraft maintenance and weapons procurement, data collection and processing, martial interests can be seen to have an immense hold in public and private sectors, consolidating the 'value' of 'security' in society. Society is coming to function as a means to invest and expand this lucrative system. Research by The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons recently demonstrated that "teachers' pension funds [...] invest heavily in companies involved in the nuclear weapons industry" including BAE Systems and Babcock International through Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds and Royal Bank.<sup>77</sup> The UK Universities Superannuation Scheme, the "principal pension scheme" of University and College employees also invests in war production.<sup>78</sup> As Michael Gayer observes, with militarisation, civil society comes to support and organise itself behind this new driving force "for the production of violence", resulting in a steady erosion of civil liberties and the encroachment of defence on other aspects of national life.<sup>79</sup> Privatisation and militarisation together create vested interests in continuing threats alongside fear of, and actual, unrest and violence.

The contracting trend has brought the gradual blurring of public and private in policing. ACPO, set up as a PLC in 1997 and replacing an informal network of police chiefs, decides on national policing strategies and consequently both influences and shapes government policy. ACPO has grown in power, influence and snowballing

financial profit even though it claims to be a 'not for profit' organisation – having lucrative subsidiary commercial companies, some of which have either an unfair advantage or a complete monopoly over their market. In addition, local authorities are inviting 'security' bids for "a wide range of services, including criminal investigations, patrolling neighbourhoods and detaining suspects".<sup>80</sup> Brian Paddick, the former Scotland Yard deputy assistant commissioner, told *The Guardian*, "The British tradition of policing by consent, rather than by force and weight of numbers, is being eroded" and these plans "will accelerate that process."<sup>81</sup> The Police Federation also called this radical shift towards private policing "an extremely dangerous road to take".<sup>82</sup> Those benefiting from the lucrative business of police militarisation, are manufacturers – supplying armoured vehicles, body scanners and surveillance equipment, including unmanned spy drones proposed for covert surveillance throughout UK airspace during future protests.<sup>83</sup> Steel cordons designed for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies have been bought in; they kept parliament 'uninfected' by protest in London.<sup>84</sup> This equipment, designed for extreme quarantine situations, was used to keep politicians distant from those wanting to question them. Boxing-in protest with 10ft high steel walls is as much a statement about state weakness and distancing us from decision-making as it is about explicit control over the public. It physicalises the divides of inequality on which the pyramid society's layers are constructed.

With so much investment in new security technologies, security contractors will be showcased throughout the Olympic Games, celebrating industry's role in the militarisation of UK society. Ray Mey, from the UN International Permanent Observatory on Security for Major Events, recommended 'lessons' be drawn from China for London Olympic security resource planning.<sup>85</sup> US-based Security Industry Association regarded the 2008 Olympics a great opportunity as they "not only showcase world-class athletes, they showcase world-class security technologies and services from our industry".<sup>86</sup> Showcasing British 'security' will be "twice the number" of media as athletes, and the focus is Chinese investment, encouraged through a 'China Business Day' during the Games and £25m spent on international investment campaigns.<sup>87</sup> Minister for the Olympics Hugh Robertson said Olympic ceremonies represent a "once-in-a-generation opportunity to showcase the very best of our country to four billion people around the world and have a potential advertising value of £2.5 billion".<sup>88</sup> But British *power* is what's being demonstrated and here it seems, for the Government, "the best of our country" is social control and security technology.

Britain's 'security showcase' will occur in a London where business confidence was recently shaken by mass public protest, and the Government have promised to ensure London is a 'clean city' during the games – one free of any product or advertisement rivalling Olympic sponsors. Volunteers will target anyone wearing a T-shirt with a corporate logo; putting masking tape over it or forcing them to remove their clothes. Apparently, "sponsors pay a lot of money for the Olympics and they are entitled to protect their investment".<sup>89</sup> In many ways, Cameron is also protecting his own investment, bringing in a 'clean city' for marketing his vision of Britain; a 'clean city' free of alternative political messages provided by protesters. Helping re-package the city for international consumption are G4 Security, whose contract shot from 10,000 to 23,700 personnel in December.<sup>90</sup> Police powers were extended ahead of the games, including "the right to enter private homes and seize political posters".<sup>91</sup> There will be fast-track removal of un-approved protests, with 'exclusion zones', probably utilising steel cordons.<sup>92</sup> And, protecting Cameron's investment, the Met has acknowledged the UK will spend whatever it takes to keep the Olympic venues 'secure'.<sup>93</sup> The Olympic budget was doubled in December, with a 'security' rise to £553m expected.<sup>94</sup> The London Olympics are being used as a manufacturing and investment opportunity – where the private sector is reliant on significant public outlay – one that helps instil compliant values in British culture. Indeed security trade organisations use contacts in

the media to emphasise the existence of a threat, and stress the value of contractors in maintaining order.<sup>95</sup>

Now at the University of Bath, following the University of Strathclyde's closure of its Sociology department due to its "too critical"<sup>96</sup> stance, David Miller and Tom Mills have charted the rise of the 'terrologist'; a community of security 'experts' with backgrounds in government or contracting who dominate our media. Having few academic credentials, 73% of these 'experts' were found to reproduce 'orthodox' statements supportive of official rhetoric and focused on violence directed at states, not state-sponsored violence.<sup>97</sup> The study cited Paul Wilkerson from the University of St. Andrews 'Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence'<sup>98</sup> whose counter-terrorism expertise helped the Government rationalise permanent anti-terror legislation.<sup>99</sup> A trend toward close supportive relationships between academics and government or industry is being imported from the US. America has a strong tradition of 'think-tanks' producing politically-skewed 'research' with conclusions that reflect their political or commercial sympathies. Conflicts of interest result from increasing ties between academic institutions and the Government or security industry.

Influential military experts Maj. Gen. Mackay and Commander Tatham have argued that this networking of "civilian and military" in the US is "urgently required" in Britain.<sup>100</sup> In the US, academics assist in, among other things, psychological warfare<sup>101</sup> and concern has been raised over the affects of military-sponsored research on academic freedom and curriculum.<sup>102</sup> The father of PR, Edward Bernays, once said, "If you can influence the leaders, either with or without their conscious co-operation, you automatically influence the group which they sway".<sup>103</sup> Anthropological writings were used to engineer oppression, blackmail and psychological techniques in Abu Ghraib.<sup>104</sup> The US 'Network of Concerned Anthropologists' has therefore been encouraging the discipline to pledge against attempts to "militarise anthropology in a way that undermines the integrity of the discipline and returns anthropology to its sad roots as a tool of colonial occupation, oppression, and violence".<sup>105</sup> Efforts are similarly threatening UK academia; proposals have included bringing social scientists into counter-terrorism and intelligence. Due to criticism, this strategy entitled 'Combating Terrorism by Countering Radicalisation' failed to have the impact of similar US programmes.<sup>106</sup> But since it was withdrawn in 2006, the ESRC ("the UK's largest funder of [academic] research on economic and social issues") has channelled funding into studies of 'security threats' and "new security challenges", incentivising research that contributes to security policy<sup>107</sup> – PhDs producing militarised knowledge for the war industries. More direct efforts are also still under active pursuit. Mackay and Tatham, both influential figures in this area, recommended that plans to put researchers at the employ of defence be adapted for trial by the MoD.<sup>108</sup>

Some charities are also used to socialise war into notions of 'Britishness', through reinforcing war as a noble institution in itself, and making 'sacrifice' something to be worshipped. They sustain a system in which, the 112 years since the 20th Century began have seen only one in which no British military personnel were killed in action (1968).<sup>109</sup> In praising what veterans have 'given' rather than criticising what was *taken* from them, groups, like the 'British Legion' and 'Help for Heroes', conceptualise military intervention as an *always* necessary sacrifice. The British Legion, being devoid of critique of any of 'our' wars, serves to mediate and even excuse the impact of this system. Past meaning of the poppy emblem largely forgotten, fundraising drives support the notion that the costs of war in general are sad but legitimate and acceptable. They conflate images of recent wars with those of WWI and WWII which saturate the TV viewing schedule. All war, viewed as 'sacrifice', is seen as the same. A dangerous education promoted through the military's expanding engagement in British schools. Since 2009 the British Legion has organised a drive for children to send postcards to soldiers bearing messages such as, "Thank you for fighting for our

country and risking your life for us. It must have been very scary and a difficult task to do. I'm sure it was hard to leave your friends and family behind. You were very brave."<sup>110</sup> The Legion draws on public sympathy for the millions injured or killed by war, without questioning its causes. It frowns on any criticism of military institutions or policy. One soldier spokesman calls the programme "a great way to get youngsters to connect with what the military has done. Anything which brings civilians and the military close together is a good thing and these cards do that."<sup>111</sup>



## Manufacturing Martial Culture

This brings us to the cultural consequences; the ripples throughout our day-to-day lives. Militarism has gone commercial with the use of contractors now barely questioned in domestic or international contexts. And British popular culture is being carefully adapted to support this policy through its culture industry. The idea of a 'Culture Industry', first introduced by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, was popularised in the 1960s and '70s as a way of thinking about the rising industries of mass-produced culture, and its ability to create conformity.<sup>112</sup> Guided by Government policy, the media have an increasingly dominant role in marketing militarism and war, as apparent through the 'War on Terror'.<sup>113</sup> Robin Beste at Stop the War Coalition claims that Rupert Murdoch's media "supported all the US-UK wars over the past 30 years, from Margaret Thatcher and the Falklands war in 1982... [right] up to the present, with Barack Obama continuing the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and now adding Libya to his tally of seven wars."<sup>114</sup> The British Legion also nurtures strong media partnerships, building support by populist appeals for 'our boys'. We are now targeted across television during poppy appeals in a way unprecedented before 9/11. The X-Factor has become a particular vehicle for this with 2011's bling-factor poppies; finalists covering first Mariah Cary's 'Hero' in 2008, then a cover of David Bowie's 'Heroes' in 2010, which sold 100,000 copies in three days.<sup>115</sup> War charities' abilities to fundraise rest on their promoting martial values and the concept that war, and 'defence' expenditure, are 'necessary'. This media power is also used to target economic or political 'problems' at home, through a collaboration of different government agencies from MI5 to Downing Street's Press Office.<sup>116</sup> The modern era of this began with Margaret Thatcher, Bernard Ingham and the Miners' Strike<sup>117</sup>, accelerated throughout 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland,<sup>118</sup> and continued to gather pace through Blair's 'spin Britain'.<sup>119</sup> Now, a veteran and adaptive culture industry is increasingly seductive for those with million-pound PR budgets – a process facilitated by the revolving door between government, the PR industry and the media. It is playing an important role in presenting the Government's latest 'crisis' to each level of the pyramid; facilitating the Government response to dissent by manufacturing an edifice of

martial values out of our cultural fabric.

Returning to the case study of the London Olympics, we can see how efforts stretch beyond physical military presence, into representations of wider national culture that associate 'Britishness' with conservative values and militarism. There will, for example, be the usual Adidas-clad volunteers and staff. But this is no ordinary sportswear; the 76,000 organisers will be sporting military-style uniform. Adidas have based the Olympic uniform style upon the Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper' uniforms. This iconic image from popular culture, now detached from its original context, makes the authority of military-wear seem more palatable for the event. Uniforms had great significance in '60s counterculture; their popularity rooted in the shock value of a "parody of treasured cultural icons" or "conservative values".<sup>120</sup> Such items were not manufactured by Adidas, but genuine symbols of power, used in protest – Carnaby Street shop 'I was Lord Kitchener's Valet' fed a growing demand for genuine military paraphernalia. The challenge to mainstream values inspired attempts to make military wear look 'effeminate' (as day-glo Beatles uniforms would have appeared).<sup>121</sup> The Olympic uniforms, in contrast, disassociate the use of uniforms from counterculture. Indeed, 2012 Olympic chief executive Paul Deighton stated their intent was to be "traditional" and "non-divisive" – a 'regal' purple and Grenadier Guard "poppy red".<sup>122</sup> With nostalgia, the popularity remains, but meaning is reassigned to conservative social values in our collective memory.

More widely, the military/royal iconography of '60s counterculture, is being referenced throughout mainstream culture, but redefined in contemporary marketing. Memorabilia has swamped UK stores. A flurry of press attention celebrated Kate Middleton's taste in choosing a vintage McQueen wedding dress. But there was no discussion about the way her and Will's nuptials were marketed as a logical extension of the 'Vintage' movement in the UK. What has been interesting is that manufactured regalia is being aggressively associated with the past through its very design. The bunting that went on sale in Tesco Superstores ahead of the Royal wedding – 'pre-crumpled', faded and aged – should be making a reappearance for the Queen's upcoming jubilee. Those seeking to capitalise on the Royal Wedding attempted to sidestep the outright jingoism and uncomfortable connotations that have commonly become associated with the Union Jack flag. Instead, we are to buy into an invented past of the cricket green and garden parties – the same implicit *England*, ironically, of unapologetic imperialism.<sup>123</sup>

The Vintage movement was borne out of 'pop-up shops'; an effort of culture in resisting dominant retail monopolies, reacting against overconsumption and disposability through an ethic to reuse. But increasingly vintage is becoming another mass-produced commodity. The Royal Wedding and Olympics demonstrate how 'Vintage' has gone full circle, moving beyond simple appropriation to the promotion of



conservatism. Overpriced vintage shops seized on the wedding with gusto, filling shelves with mismatched tea sets and 3-tier china cake stands that granny would love. Vintage Shop 'Beyond Retro' staged a 'Royal Wedding Party' as a marketing scheme unquestionably embracing images of 'royalty' within a readily accepted aesthetic of 'retro' products. Apparently, the event was "Right royal fun, whether you're a monarchist or an anarchist".<sup>124</sup>

Interestingly, the largest-selling item at 'I was Lord Kitchener's Valet' was the WWII Lord Kitchener poster that read 'Your Country Needs You'. These yesteryear public information posters were brought back into mass manufacture in recent years. But no longer do such items represent an attempt to "subvert conventional ideas",<sup>125</sup> as their former '60s counterculture appropriation did. Those reproducing the 'Keep Calm and Carry On' poster say it represents "nostalgia for a certain British character, an outlook"; an idea of 'national character' as 'not making a fuss' over austerity.<sup>126</sup> The recession hit in 2009, and their sales soared. The slogan even appeared on 'environmentally friendly' shopping bags – a must-have student shopping accessory. In a mood of 'keep your chin up' the 'Nectar' loyalty scheme even urged us to 'Keep Calm and Carry One'.<sup>127</sup> Psychologist Lesley Prince claimed that "people have been sold a lie since the 1970s. They were promised the earth and now they're worried about everything [...] This is saying, [...] it'll be all right".<sup>128</sup> In contrast to the sentimental British stereotype through which it's seen now, Lewis points out that the 'Keep Calm' poster was never released during WWII, because one with a similar message caused quite a "fuss" of public opposition, it being seen as "condescending" and "authoritarian".<sup>129</sup>

In invoking a mythical and nostalgic notion of what is, essentially, an affected *Englishness*, the Olympics, according to organisers, is unashamedly making a tribute to "Britian's Royal, military and sporting history".<sup>130</sup> Technical staff uniforms, an even more formal 'flannel, blazer and trilby' affair, nods at the Henley Regatta.<sup>131</sup> According to organisers they represent "heritage with a modern twist"<sup>132</sup> – but whose heritage exactly? The 'British' sporting heritage used in the design is the exclusive, conservative style of the Henley Regatta and Wimbledon. But then the tickets have mostly gone to bureaucrats, politicians and corporate sponsors. Maybe blazers with Big Ben buttons are a consolation to Londoners, who pay 38p a week more than the rest of us through their council tax for the Games despite unavailable tickets.<sup>133</sup> It is no coincidence that organisers have chosen to celebrate 'royal' heritage, with its inferred deference. Immediately prior to the Olympics



will be the pageantry of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee<sup>134</sup>, a fitting vehicle for engendering martial values and overlaying cohesion onto an uneasy population. Jubilee merchandise was available to buy in the stores months ago.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, the Queen will be marketing herself in person – we are told a lead-up royal tour of Britain is planned; and more sprightly members of the family will be reminding the Commonwealth of her eternal reign.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, we've already had Prince William's heavily publicised military tour of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) in a run up to celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Falklands' war, just having had 'major celebrations' to mark the 25th anniversary.<sup>137</sup>

By creating objects of nostalgia, such as uniforms for the Olympics, in our culture we commodify, glamorise and romanticise power. For immediate political reasons, conservative forces are adjusting our perspective on the past, sanitising our real-world associations through the manufacture of nostalgic folk memory. With careful attention to image, the Royal family has undergone a complete turnaround from the status of (according to *The Guardian*) a "repressed memory" at the end of the 1990s, to the reborn popular figureheads being celebrated in 2012.<sup>138</sup> The Coalition's history tsar Simon Schama claims the Royals can "be a cheer-up panacea for our tough times, an emblem of Britishness, optimism and the community coming together".<sup>139</sup> Or, as it's otherwise been described, "an attempt to promote 'dreamlike constructions' of earlier 'golden ages' by recourse to an invented past of imperial greatness when 'Britannia ruled the waves' and the English were not 'beaten at their own game' of cricket" as "a way of managing 'contemporary political, economic and social problems'".<sup>140</sup>

## Shaking the Foundations

Back in 2006 a Nordic festival of art and social criticism voiced a warning (now poignant, in the wake of Breivik's Utoeya killings) that if we try to forget or romanticise our colonial past this "continues to reproduce itself as waves of intolerance, xenophobia, and nationalism".<sup>141</sup> Simon Jenkins has critically pointed to the huge representation of WWII imagery saturating British institutional culture, arguing that only "insecure nations" would need the psychological support of clinging to stories of themselves as victors.<sup>142</sup> Britain's island and colonial histories are of course more complex than this, but so much of the state that has been and remains violently exploitative is gradually being erased from representations of the institutions responsible. The racism of empire is rewritten and fed back to us in the more palatable forms of entrepreneurialism and 'national security'. Paul Gilroy argues that, "without the removal of the cultural and psychological screens that block access to [the past], Europe has no chance".<sup>143</sup> Martial values are becoming the mortar of unthinking cohesion; infiltrating the meaning of the habitual and familiar, and prioritising superficial reactions over complex understandings in our culture.

Furthermore, they are used to justify authoritarian repression a full 18 years after Margaret Thatcher waved her fist at "the enemy without" (in the Falklands) and the "enemies within" (protesting miners and trades unions).<sup>144</sup> We can see the Coalition government engaged in an internationally provocative talking-up of a militarisation of the Falklands, and Cameron readying to crush any opportunity for protest in a constitutionally unravelling Britain. The period of the Falklands War propelled the public image of Thatcher from "inexperienced young girl" to "formidable leader". At a time of unrest, David Cameron similarly seeks to appear decisive, and bolster his own strength by reawakening populist images of colonial power – this, remember, when only in 2003 a million marched in London expressing opposition to the then-imminent war against Iraq. When Prince William took up an 'entirely routine' posting to the Falkland Islands the political build-up made for a strong statement.<sup>145</sup> MP Penny Mordaunt told parliament she approved of William delivering the message of ownership and that "his destiny as the future king" to whom "the islanders will owe their allegiance should not go unnoticed in this jubilee

year".<sup>146</sup> As in Thatcher's time, the Falklands episode for Cameron offers a media opportunity to distract attention from austerity and persistent unease in Britain; focussing martial values behind a distant 'defence of British subjects', so attacks can be made on civil liberties on the home front.

The martial values seeking further purchase on popular culture talk of 'interventions' rather than war in a misrepresentation of its permanency and its principal aggressor, yet seek justification with reference to WWII and a partial, heavily romanticised national narrative. They extend beyond foreign 'interventions' into civil society; commercial interventions, interventions in childhood, in academia, in culture, in debate and democratic process... The experience of young people in Britain today is of a country that's been continuously at war, conduct which sets out to seize 'information space' too; they have witnessed an increase in oppressive domestic policing, and are now to be aggressively trained not to question authority. Evidently the youth of Britain must know their place, if they are to be the reproductive force of an authoritarian pyramid. It's a pyramid that may be weighing greatly on our backs, but one suspects it will continue to be resisted, shaken from its foundations...

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