

WHO ARE THE NATIONAL LIBERALS?

The National Liberal Party is a political party supporting the principle of National Liberalism.

National Liberals believe that the personal liberty of a nation's citizens is vitally important and that this freedom is best preserved within the framework of a democratic nation state. A National Liberal will therefore support measures protecting and promoting personal liberty, greater democracy and national independence.

UNDER THREAT

The two main achievements of the 19th century were the proliferation of Nation States and the development of Civil Liberties and Individual Rights. Today these achievements are under threat.

NATIONAL SENTIMENT

Establishment politicians are happy to work towards an unreformed 'ever closer (European) Union' or slavishly follow US foreign policy. We now, more than ever, need an independent (and ethical) British foreign policy that follows the dictates of national interest and achieves peace by respecting others interests. Questions of national identity, vital in an era of global migration and globalization, are being ignored.

Civil and communal strife in many parts of the world, including the U.K. seem all but inevitable. Yet there is an alternative – the creation of unifying and inclusive national sentiments.

LOSS OF LIBERTY

Establishment politicians are using the 'War on Terror' to facilitate a growth in a 'surveillance society' whilst restricting civil liberties such as freedom of speech and association and the right to privacy. A heavily regulated society does not fit well with our traditions, where the protection of our liberty is often taken for granted and where an Englishman's home was considered 'his castle'.

NATIONAL AND LIBERAL

We must reverse these dangerous trends by helping to protect our treasured freedoms and liberties within the framework of a preserved nation state. We

need a fresh and commonsense third alternative to the forces of Conservative and Labour. We need the National Liberal Party.

NATIONAL LIBERALISM

The two main philosophies and engines for political change in the 19th century were Nationalism and Liberalism.

Their adherents were instrumental in challenging the multi-national dynasties that controlled Europe. Nationalists dreamt of statehood for their national communities whilst Liberals strove for individual liberty and the freedom to organise for social change. Indeed many activists proclaimed to be followers of both creeds.

The great liberal patriot Giuseppe Mazzini believed that liberty could only be attained through national Independence (of Italy but everywhere else as well). He believed that through the construction of nation-states not only would liberty be obtained for their citizens but international peace too i.e. through the satisfaction of national feeling.

A liberal nationalist would defend the value of national identity by stating that "individuals require a national identity in order to lead meaningful, autonomous lives" whilst liberal and democratic societies need the stability of "national identity in order to function properly"

Unfortunately, in the 20th century these ideas were superseded by the rise of totalitarian philosophies such as Fascism, which sort to exaggerate nationalism or the 'common good' at the expense of individual liberty, or Communism that sought to exaggerate class consciousness at the expense of the nation i.e. ignoring common ties.

Whilst these philosophies have been largely discredited they nevertheless left a stain upon nationalism and, perhaps less obviously, liberalism. The perversion of the 'sovereignty of the people' from national self-determination to national aggrandisement via Empire or war, led many to connect it to xenophobia. Indeed the experiences of the last world war made a new generation believe that nationalism inevitably led to war.

Liberalism on the other hand became identified with Europe's 'political class', as representatives of Liberal democratic states. They too viewed nation-building as a threat to peace and personal liberties (unless emerging from dying Empires). They have sought to maintain the peace via supra-national bodies, firstly the United Nations and soon afterwards the EU (beginning as the Common Market).

Thus we often hear talk of the 'liberal' establishment regardless of party colour. In reality since the fall of communism in the latter part of the 20th century most of these states have begun to take on the shape of monoliths, unencumbered by ideology and only interested in exercising power for the sake of it. Those that are driven by ideas are more often seen as threats to

the 'New Order'. There is increasingly little left of their liberalism and much more of a controlling paternalistic hand. Political correctness is just one of the spin-offs of an increasingly Big Brother establishment.

Indeed the two abiding achievements of the 19th century, a proliferation of national independence and political and civil liberties, are under threat. Here in the UK we see the political class happy to either work towards an 'ever closer (European) Union' or slavishly follow US foreign policy. We need more than ever an independent (and ethical) British foreign policy that follows the dictates of national interest and achieves peace through observing everyone else's. The problem of national identity following global migration, a byproduct of globalisation, is being ignored. This will inevitably lead to civil and communal strife in many parts of the world in the absence of any attempt at creating unifying and inclusive national sentiments.

The 'New World Order' establishments are using the 'War on Terror' to facilitate a growth in the surveillance society whilst restricting civil liberties e.g. freedom of speech, association, ID Cards. A heavily regulated society does not fit well in a sophisticated western democracy, particularly one which has taken the protection of their liberty for granted i.e. where an 'Englishman's home was always his castle'.

Now is the time to re-unite these two great ideas to reverse these dangerous trends by helping to protect our cherished freedoms and liberties within the framework of a preserved nation state. We need a resurgent National Liberal movement as the vehicle to achieve these aims and we need it soon.

THE THREE PILLARS OF NATIONAL LIBERALISM

LIBERTY: INDEPENDENCE: DEMOCRACY

NATIONAL LIBERALS believe that individual liberty and the right to organise social change is essential for human progress – but we believe a Liberal society can only be attained by people sharing an inclusive culture within the framework of an independent national state.

NATIONAL LIBERALS believe that national sentiment is intrinsic to mankind and that an independent nation state is a natural building block of human society. As nationalists we believe in the right to self-determination for all nations and reject imperialism.

NATIONAL LIBERALS believe that the principal enemy of liberty are Big Brother Governments who are ever ready to abuse their power for selfish ends or lead us to war. They enslave the people in 'the name of the people'.

NATIONAL LIBERALS believe that the antidote to Big Brother Government attacks on liberty and national feeling is by introducing forms of Direct

Democracy. By building democratic institutions and voting systems we can ensure the 'sovereignty of the people'.

In conclusion

NATIONAL LIBERALS believe "individuals require a national identity in order to live meaningful autonomous lives" and believe liberal societies need the "stability of national identity in order to function properly". Both liberty and independent nations need strong democratic institutions to defend them from the corruption of Government.

NATIONALISM VS LIBERALISM?

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS & COMMON DUTIES: NATIONALISM VS LIBERALISM?

At the core of liberal values the protection of individual rights are paramount. 'Classical liberalism' therefore seeks to support the rights of individuals within, and sometimes even against, the state. It believes that individual liberty and the right to organise for social change through the free will of individual citizens, is essential for progress. The State on the other hand is most usually viewed as seeking to impose duties in its favour upon individual citizens, thus minimising change in favour of stability.

A liberal, outside the organs of the state apparatus, will therefore seek to maximise individual rights as a goal in itself and be, as such, in competition with the state's perceived goals. The balance of the rights and duties of individuals within a nation (in practice the state) is in perpetual flux as the two sides jockey for influence.

A 'Traditional Nationalist' will on the other hand willingly accept the surrender of some individual rights in the interests of the nation, usually the state, for the 'common good'. In periods of tension, such as war, civil strife or the threat of 'terror' the Nationalist sacrifice of citizens' rights in the interests of all, in order to deal with the immediate 'common' threat, often becomes predominant.

The impact on the balance of rights and duties is today of particular pertinence as we enter the age of the so-called 'War on Terror'. In order to increase the security of its citizens, Western Governments (including those that might call themselves 'liberal' in the loose sense of the word), have already begun to erode individual rights of association and privacy. Ironically the increasing diminution of these rights is creating an ordered society quite alien to a Classical Liberal (and a National Liberal).

When the personal security of a nation's individuals is seen as paramount, individual's exercising their right to 'pull in a different direction' to the orthodoxy are viewed as a luxury at best or as 'potential fifth-columnists' at worst. For liberals however this curtailment of individual rights disrupts the natural process of political change and renewal and the 'authoritarian impulse' is hard (for the state apparatus) to shed even after the perceived 'threat to the nation' has passed.

If we view then the classical/traditional versions of Liberalism and Nationalism as in direct conflict over rights and duties, is it possible for these opposing views to be reconciled?

INDIVIDUALS DO NOT EXIST IN ISOLATION

Liberalism does not see individuals as acting in isolation, for people interact. In modern society it is almost impossible to be independent of others; work and services make this unfeasible. Individuals therefore have to interact with others and in doing so often follow the moral codes and cultural mores of their immediate 'locality', ranging from their neighbourhood, community and through to the nation. Even if an individual rejects the state in which they live, it can usually only be in principle rather than practice.

We are therefore rooted as individuals within our culture and the type of society it has developed and created over the centuries. Indeed the sacrifice individuals make through taxation or service is only acceptable because they see themselves as part of a greater whole and perceive fellow citizens as partners in a shared way of life.

Society so organised is also necessary to prevent the 'strong' individual from abusing the 'weak'.

A National Liberal recognises therefore that any viable nation-state requires social cohesion and that rests upon communal and patriotic i.e. national 'unity'.

A MEANINGFUL NATION-STATE

Whilst pursued more often through the endeavours of the State, Nationalism actually stems from a love of (own) kind and the desire for self-determination. This includes the right to organise as a (national) group and as free individuals.

For a nation, as apart from a state, to be meaningful it must be a reflection of the values of its constituent parts i.e. its members, its individual citizens. A meaningful nation state therefore can only exist when its members can as individuals organise for social and political change (individual rights) through democratic means.

A National Liberal also recognises that there is a common culture within any nation and that this culture evolves from the choices and behaviour of its citizens and must be reflected in the outlook of the state. In the United Kingdom this culture is liberal in character and therefore the state's values should be liberal.

We can see therefore that individual rights, such as the right to organise for political or social ends, are essential elements to any meaningful nation state and in turn such a state is required to ensure the order and cohesion necessary to protect individuals from one another.

AGAINST OMNIPOTENCE

National Liberalism represents the philosophy underpinning the idea of the liberal nation state whilst National Liberals are those who seek to find and maintain the necessary yet practical balance between the contradictions that will sometimes emerge between individual rights and communal duties. Failure to do so inevitably condemns societies to the abuses of omnipotent individuals or an omnipotent state. Some believe we already suffer from too much of both.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

National Liberals believe that the personal liberty of a nation's citizens is vital and that this freedom is best preserved within the framework of a democratic nation state. A National Liberal will therefore support measures protecting and promoting personal liberty, greater democracy and national independence.

The two main achievements of the 19th century were the proliferation of Nation States and Civil Liberties. Today these achievements are under threat. Supra-national bodies such as the European Union seek to destabilise existing nation states whilst 'Globalisation' is undermining national interests, by rapidly increasing the movement of people and capital around the world in the interests of Big Business.

Personal liberties are being restricted in an increasingly regulated 'surveillance society'.

'Big Brother' Governments are beginning to intrude into many aspects of citizens lives e.g. Public Order Acts, ID Cards and political correctness, without any appreciable benefit i.e. winning any so-called war on crime/terror.

Whilst we can identify the threats to our freedoms and identity we also have a clear idea of the principles that underpin a healthy society. We use these principles in guiding us in determining policy:

- Protect the political and civic freedoms of the individual
- Promote Direct Democracy, including greater use of referenda
- Support the decentralisation of power to the lowest practical level(s) i.e. 'subsidiarity'
- Support the widespread ownership of property, both business and personal
- Support for the 'Third' economic sector i.e. the Independent Small Trader, Self-Employed and Co-operatives
- Preservation of the nation state
- Recognising the importance of the Family, Community and Nation as building blocks that construct a healthy and stable society whilst accepting those who choose a different lifestyle or outlook
- Support measures to keep the land and environment 'Green and Pleasant'.