

Con not Consultation

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We face the unedifying prospect of witnessing Theresa May and Yvette Cooper battling it out for who can out-feminist the other. Cooper has weighed in with her promise to indoctrinate young boys as feminists, Ref.[1], plus her constant sniping at May about her failure to tackle domestic violence. May is now responding with "*Strengthening the Law on Domestic Abuse - A Consultation*", Ref.[2]. So, dear voter, you can have any politics you like, as long as it's feminism.

Domestic Violence - The Background Facts

Let us recall the background a little before we get to this so-called "Consultation". Domestic violence has been declining for 20 years, Ref.[3]. You would not think so from the way it is reported in the Guardian, e.g., Ref.[4], or by the BBC, where the scourge of domestic violence is relentlessly talked-up. The Guardian's misrepresentation of partner abuse issues is so bad that even one of their regular columnists is in despair, Ref.[6]. The media and leading politicians fall over themselves to appear the most concerned. We have Yvette Cooper in the Guardian on 10th March 2014 accusing the Home Secretary of turning her back on the "shocking scale" of domestic violence and demanding that a new commissioner covering violence against women be appointed.

Ah, yes, only for women, mind. It is always only for women that concern arises. And that brings me to the most important fact about partner violence: men suffer too. In the UK, in round terms, 40% of victims of partner abuse are men. Worldwide ~50% of the victims of partner abuse are men. This has been established by huge volumes of data and research, in many countries over many years, and must surely be amongst the best established facts in the whole of social science, Ref.[3]. That, however, fails to impress the feminist lobby - and they are in control of almost all the refuges and the associated funding.

Ah, funding. Now we get to the nub of the matter. Suppose you had been campaigning tirelessly for twenty years to end some scourge. Further suppose that said scourge was diminishing. Would you not be inclined to advertise your success? Surely you would not pretend that said scourge was, in fact, getting worse? It seems unlikely.....until you take funding into account. Any funding body might look upon a diminishing demand as requiring diminishing funds. So you might be tempted to talk-up the demand in order to protect your funding - especially if, in fact, these same funds also permitted a little politicking on the side.

These are cash-strapped times of austerity and local authorities are (in some cases) cutting funds to the domestic abuse sector, as they are to almost everything. *Women's Aid* have noticed that the data on men as victims of partner abuse has finally begun to diffuse through the skulls of local authorities and has "*resulted in the numbers of female and male victims increasingly seen as almost on a par by policy makers, commissioners of services at local level, the police and other professionals who come into contact with victims.*", Ref.[9]. This is the correct impression, of course, but the refuge industry do not like it one bit. There are two reasons: ideology and funding.

The importance of ideology cannot be over-stated. All the women's domestic abuse support groups are overtly feminists. They do not hide the fact. The core of feminism is patriarchy theory, which can be said with 90% accuracy to be the view that

everything bad is due to masculinity (which we can equate with men, in practice if not in feminist theory). Domestic violence is seen by feminists, and hence virtually the whole of the refuge industry, as a natural manifestation of patriarchy and hence is necessarily the abuse of women by men. This is made abundantly clear by *Women's Aid*, Ref.[7],

"Domestic violence against women by men is caused by the misuse of power and control within a context of male privilege. Male privilege operates on an individual and societal level to maintain a situation of male dominance, where men have power over women and children. Perpetrators of domestic violence choose to behave abusively to get what they want and gain control. Their behaviour often originates from a sense of entitlement which is often supported by sexist, racist, homophobic and other discriminatory attitudes. In this way, domestic violence by men against women can be seen as a consequence of the inequalities between men and women, rooted in patriarchal traditions that encourage men to believe they are entitled to power and control over their partners."

The denial that partner abuse of men by women is widespread is therefore crucial to feminists in order to avoid the entire pseudo-intellectual edifice of feminist theory crashing down. In fact, the above view of domestic violence can be discredited immediately by the observation that of all relationship types, lesbian relationships display the greatest frequency of abuse (see Ref.[3] for the data). As regards heterosexual relationships, in addition to the enormous quantity of survey data which shows that abuse is comparably often female-on-male, there is also a large body of research literature which specifically discredits this feminist-patriarchy theory of PV, e.g., Refs.[14-20].

So, feminism is, in fact, completely discredited. That it will not go away is simply because its adherents are profoundly irrational and anti-scientific. Or, to be more exact, it is because they are happy to live with illogic in the service of their self-interest. So it is that Polly Neate, the CEO of Women's Aid still insists that "*domestic violence is a gendered crime, this should not be controversial*", Ref.[5]. It isn't controversial, Ms Neate, it's wrong.

Feminists' Convenient Irrationality

I cannot resist a brief digression on feminist irrationality. Responding to a challenge that a proposed "Violence Against Women" bill in the Welsh parliament was sexist for excluding men and boys, Ref.[8] quotes Welsh Women's Aid as opining that "*the term 'violence against women' does not exclude men and boys as it refers to a crime type rather than a particular class of victim.*" I rather regard that statement as violence against my brain. The phrase "violence against women" **does** exclude men and boys. This is an incontrovertible logical fact, any disagreement being merely the sound of a gurgling drain. Another example was when the Guardian asked a number of 'celebrities' to explain the difference between sexism and misogyny. Now, if this question had appeared in an intelligence test there would have been just one correct answer: sexism can be against either sex, whereas misogyny is specifically against females. But no. Not a single one of the (specially selected feminist) celebrities mentioned that at all. Instead they laboriously discussed the minutiae of different anti-female sexism. Did the fact that sexism can be anti-male really not cross their minds? Or were they just pretending?

I don't think feminists are incapable of rational thought. I don't believe they are stupid. It's worse than that. They merely do not care if what they say is nonsense. They are concerned only about creating an impression, manipulating the public perception and acquiring power.

Funding the Feminist PV Industry

But back to the issue of funding the feminist refuge industry. Polly Neate, the CEO of Women's Aid complains that, "*increasing pressure for the provision of "gender neutral" services, both for refuge and outreach, is exacerbating the crisis of funding to specialist domestic violence services for women*", Ref.[5]. If it is true that local authorities are putting pressure on the women's refuges to provide support for male victims, it would be rather silly of them. How can people who are ideologically wedded to blaming men be expected to help men effectively? You might as well attempt to assist foxes by funding the Berkeley Hunt.

Blaming male victims for funding cuts has become fashionable of late. Sandra Laville, writing in the Guardian, Ref.[10], reports Midlands' refuges complaining as follows: "*Specialist safe houses for women and children – which were forged out of the feminist movement in the 1970s – are being forced to shut by some local authorities because they do not take in male victims....The change in focus has been devastating for the Haven in Coventry, a charity which has run the city's women's refuges for 43 years, but is fighting for survival after its service was decommissioned by the council in favour of self-contained accommodation units and new accommodation for male victims. The Wolverhampton Haven, which has run the refuges for 41 years, is having its funding from the city cut by £300,000 and – as it struggles to maintain services – has been forced to reserve some of its places for men, even though it has had no male referrals to the accommodation so far.*"

But that is all grossly misleading, as Ally Fogg, Ref.[6], has discovered,

- Wolverhampton Haven has not had any male referrals so far because it has not offered any services to men so far. If one looks at their website, it clearly says at the top and bottom of every page that they offer services to women and children.
- Wolverhampton City Council don't specify the number of each gender that should be supported – the service is expected to respond according to demand.
- "*In Coventry the council has increased their budget to support victims of domestic violence by £250,000 per year, a rise of around 25%. The contract has indeed been lost by Haven but the (unnamed) body that is taking it on is offering increased refuge provision from 40 units to 54 – an increase of 33% in beds. I don't know what proportion of those will be taken up by men, but I would bet my house that they will account for fewer than 14 of them.*" (i.e., there will be more places for women, not fewer).
- There is no local help for male victims in Coventry or Wolverhampton - none at all, nothing.

Blaming male victims for the funding problems of women's refuges is a new low for the feminist refuge industry, and that is saying something. It emphasises that provision for male partner abuse victims must be made by specialist service providers catering specifically to men, not the existing women's organisations, a point made by Glen Poole in Ref.[5].

The Consultation Document

So much for the background, but what is the Home Office's "*Strengthening the Law on Domestic Abuse - A Consultation*" all about? Domestic violence, in the sense of physical violence, is, of course, already illegal. In addition, the existing understanding of common assault can extend to non-physical violence where there is a threat of imminent violence. Furthermore, also under existing law, non-violent coercive and controlling behaviour is captured by legislation that covers stalking and harassment. However, this does not explicitly apply to coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate relationships. It is this latter aspect which the Home Office is seeking to include in legislation. If so, this would bring the law in line with the expanded Government definition of domestic abuse adopted in March 2013. (One might add that this suggests that the Government has had it in mind to change the law in this way for some time). The consultation asks for views on whether the law needs to be strengthened in this manner.

The Consultation document expands upon the definition of controlling behaviour as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, *depriving them of the means needed for independence*, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is defined as an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, *or frighten* their victim.

The Consultation asks whether the law needs to be strengthened to make it clear that these behaviours are criminal when perpetrated in an intimate relationship to control someone *or cause them fear*.

I make observations on this Consultation document below, noting that there are four areas of concern: (i) the wording of the additional law; (ii) the gender neutrality or otherwise of the proposal; (iii) the all-important implementation; and, (iii) the Consultation process itself.

Comments on the Proposed Law and Its (Spurious) Gender Neutrality

The clause *depriving them of the means needed for independence* is curious, for it is logically impossible. If someone is independent then one cannot deprive them of the means needed for independence, for, by definition, if they are independent they do not require another party to provide for them. What is really meant is to make illegal *depriving them of the means needed for dependence*, because only a dependent person needs 'means' to be supplied by someone else. So, in plain English, this would make it illegal for person A to fail to support person B. Person A would be obliged to provide whatever unspecified 'means' might be deemed necessary - by whom is not clear. What is also unclear is which party is person A and which person B, a rather important distinction since one party has the obligation and the other party the benefit. Of course we know what is meant in practice, A = man, B = woman. This cannot be stated in the wording because the appearance, or subterfuge, of gender neutrality must be maintained. The devil is all in the implementation in practice. But interpreted as one knows it will be, a husband becomes a slave. I am reminded of the obligation of Muslim men under Islamic law to provide *Nafaqa* to their wives - money sufficient for all the family's living expenses - on pain of imprisonment.

According to the above wording, it becomes a crime to *cause fear*. The problem with this is that fear is not objectively measurable. One only has the complainant's word for

it that they were made fearful. Moreover, why should one party be punished for the unreasonable timidity of another? The pretence of gender neutrality here is disingenuous beyond belief. The truth is that if a woman says that a man made her fearful, she will be believed. The potential accusation that "he frightened me" will hang in the air like a metaphorical gun in the woman's hand. But if a man says that a woman made him fearful, he will not be believed even when it is true.

Finally, I note that the wording of the law, if it were applied in the workplace would make most employers criminals. Consider the criteria: "making a person subordinate" (almost universal in the workplace), "exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain" (almost a definition of employment), and, "regulating their everyday behaviour" (most employers have codes of practice imposed on employees). Of course, the law would not apply in the workplace. But I make this observation to illustrate that these criteria, which are presented as being abuses, may be nothing of the kind. It depends entirely on context. And who is to decide upon context within the family? The police? Social workers (God help us)? Who is to decide the ultimate unknowable - what goes on between intimate partners behind closed doors? This law would be unworkable - unless your objective were simply to hold a gun to every man's head.

Implementation - Against Men

The working of law is not merely a matter of what is written in legislation. If it were, then custody of children after divorce would not be granted overwhelmingly to mothers, there would not be twenty times more men in prison than women, and there would not be 100 times the number of men as women in prison for sexual offenses. The working of the law depends upon how the police and the judiciary implement it and this depends hugely upon prevailing societal attitudes - because policemen, policewomen, lawyers and judges are all members of society.

That there will be a firm intention to implement the new law to punish men, and virtually only men, is already apparent from the above observations. But it is also clear from the influence of the women's refuge industry in the formulation of the Consultation. This is revealed by explicit gender bias in the wording at several points, of which examples are,

- *Tackling all forms of **violence against women and girls**, including domestic abuse, has been a key priority for this Government. Our plan to tackle domestic abuse is set out in our strategy document 'A Call to **End Violence Against Women and Girls**'. (Ref.[12]).*
- *The number of **women** killed by a partner or ex-partner in the last year was 77 - the lowest it has been in over a decade.*
- *"I wanted to charge him [the perpetrator] yet I was talked out of it. I had physical evidence to say he'd hit me. To him [the police officer] it was a waste of time, or she'll only drop the charges or I can't be bothered with the paperwork. That's how I felt." (The anecdote is of a female victim and a male perpetrator)*
- *In recognition that domestic abuse often features subversive exertion of power and control...(The issue here is that "power" is a feminist keyword which always denotes men. The word "subversive" is very strange, but seems to denote evil intent and malicious forethought).*

That Women's Aid and similar refuge organisations were involved in the wording of the Consultation is likely. Certainly they are gleeful that the Consultation is being held. Their reaction is recorded on the *Women's Aid* site. Its sexist bias is undisguised, as the following extracts show,

- *The Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign is celebrating a major success today, as the Government announced plans to consult on reconciling criminal law with the Home Office definition of domestic violence.... The Campaign by Women's Aid, the Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation, and Paladin, has been calling for this change, to **protect women**.....Criminalising coercive control will allow **women** experiencing domestic violence to seek police support...*
- *Polly Neate, Chief Executive of Women's Aid said: "We welcome the Government's intention to consult on the criminalisation of coercive control and psychological abuse and reconcile the criminal law around abuse with the Home Office's definition. Two **women** a week are killed by domestic violence, and coercive control is the central feature of that violence...."*
- *Laura Richards, Chief Executive of Paladin said: "I am pleased Government have heard our voices & the voices of victims. It's important the law is modernised to reflect the reality of domestic violence as a pattern of behaviour, coercive control and psychological abuse. Too many **women** have lost their lives and too many are silenced as a result of abuse."*
- *Rhea Gargour, Chief Operating Officer for the Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation said: We are thrilled...*

Given the bias of women's refuge organisations against male victims, the fact that they are "thrilled" with the Consultation, and indeed pushed very hard for it to happen, is all the proof you need regarding how they anticipate the new law will be implemented.

Implementation is indeed the crucial issue. The behaviour of the police is key since the police determine if an incident is escalated as a crime. The Consultation refers to the HMIC Review into the police response to domestic abuse incidents. The resulting report, Ref.[13], "*exposed significant failings, including a lack of visible police leadership and direction, poor victim care and deficiencies in basic policing.*" Theresa May states, "*I am clear that there must be an immediate and lasting change in the police response to domestic abuse. This means a change in culture right from the officers in charge to those on the frontline. I am chairing a National Oversight Group to make sure this happens.*" So, the Home Secretary herself will oversee the implementation of harsher laws specifically against men.

The True Motives

The Home Office, and hence the police forces, are under pressure from the feminist refuge lobby to take a harsher line (on men, obviously), increasing arrest rates - even under the existing law. The new law will open up a whole new vista for the arrest and subsequent imprisonment of more men. This is the objective of the feminist lobby. Ostensibly it is to protect vulnerable women. But the true objectives are also,

- to reinforce the "men bad, women good" narrative which drives the societal prejudice and results in real disadvantage to men and advantage to women;
- hence to protect feminist patriarchy theory and avoid discrediting feminism itself;

- to reverse the decline in domestic abuse statistics, by lowering the bar on criminality and increasing the number of 'offenses';
- hence to protect, and hopefully increase, the funding of the feminist women's support groups.

The Consultation Process and the Elephants in the Room

The process for making responses to the Consultation is via the straitjacket of four questions which are designed to prompt the desired answer. There is little doubt that the women's refuge groups will have their responses already prepared. I will not bother to critique these questions. Their bias is obvious and the outcome of the "Consultation" is a foregone conclusion. The responses, which will predominantly be from the feminist women's support groups, will be used to justify going forward with the legislation.

There are two elephants in the room: a pair of great ironies. The first is that, when it comes to coercion and control, it is women who are the masters, not men. I am tempted to say that coercion and control are standard wifely behaviours. A man enters marriage hoping his wife will not change, whereas a woman enters marriage with every intention of moulding her husband to her will. But that does not mean that I think such behaviours should be made criminal. I do not. One needs to be very careful about allowing the State into our private homes to control our intimate behaviours. And this brings me to the second irony. This legislation will itself be controlling. Are we to be abused by the State? Or will the State merely be the agent of women who will be able to deploy this law at will against their partner. Is this the next chapter of feminist control of men? I think so. But it may backfire.

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