

The Drawbacks of Political Correctness

Political Correctness is a really serious danger to political health.

Saul Bellow

Freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth...[We know] order cannot be secured merely through fear of punishment for its infraction; that it is hazardous to discourage thought, hope and imagination; that fear breeds repression; that repression breeds hate; that hate menaces stable government; that the path of safety lies in the opportunity to discuss freely supposed grievances and proposed remedies; and that the fitting remedy for evil counsels is good ones.

*Justice Louis Brandeis,
concurring in Whitney v. California (1927)*

As well as its benefits, political correctness has drawbacks, and the more that political correctness strengthens its grip on the minds of policy makers and opinion formers, the more drawbacks it has.

At the start of the twenty-first century, most of the benefits of political correctness have already been banked—the basic promotion of equality for women, homosexuals, disabled and ethnic minorities. With diminishing returns to the benefits, political correctness is now causing far more harm than good.

Although the redistribution of power from the strong to the weak can provide definite benefits, taken to extremes it can cause damaging unintended consequences. Aristotle believed that every virtue is associated with two vices, one by an insufficiency of the characteristic related to that

virtue, the other by excess. Redistributing wealth from rich to poor leads to a more equal, fairer and more harmonious society, but, as the failure of communism showed, excess of redistribution leads to economic stagnation, widespread poverty, poor quality of life and endemic demoralisation. Denunciations of xenophobia, jingoism and racism are necessary, but taken to excess lead to the destruction of any sense of national identity that produces social solidarity.

Political correctness promotes the creation of a 'victim mentality', discourages people from taking responsibility for their own lives, suppresses free speech, and distorts public debate, leading to bad policies being adopted.

It can be so extreme that it harms even those it is supposed to help. Women can have their employment chances in the workplace harmed by giving them ever more rights than men, making it rational for employers to discriminate against them; the vulnerable are encouraged to live rough on the streets by charity handouts which create a street culture, tempting them away from hostels where they can be helped more effectively; the unemployed are encouraged to languish on benefits rather than find a job by a welfare system so comfortable that it can make work financially unattractive; young black males have their education harmed by being encouraged to blame others for their failure rather than setting higher goals for themselves and taking responsibility for their lives; ethnic minority children can have their life and employment chances damaged by not being required to learn English and integrate more into mainstream society.

Creation of a 'Victim Class'

The redistribution of power from the strong to the weak can be so great as a result of political correctness that many people find it rational to campaign to make themselves appear vulnerable in the eyes of others.

THE DRAWBACKS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Achievement of 'victim status' can lead to considerable rewards—apart from soothing sympathy, you can avoid being openly challenged by others, accusing those who challenge you of an 'ism' or 'phobia', and attract special treatment and benefits from policy makers.

Victim status is best achieved by tirelessly promoting the damage that 'society' does to you, while trying to silence those who would challenge you. Campaigners trying to achieve the full benefits of victim status on behalf of a group of people do so by exaggerating either the scale or the seriousness of the problem.

The scale of the problem can be increased either by simply inflating the numbers affected, or diluting the definition of victim to such an extent that far more people are drawn into it. Thus women's campaigners have claimed that one in four women is the victim of domestic violence by including verbal abuse, while disability campaigners claim one in eight people is disabled by broadening the definition of disabled to such an extent that it includes many people who would probably see themselves as perfectly able, thank you very much.

One of the most successful campaigns for victim status has been by Muslim groups in Britain, notably the Muslim Association of Britain, which increases its clout by inflating the number of Muslims in Britain by a million more than the official census, and by accusing anyone who tackles its extremist Islamist agenda of 'Islamophobia'. Although it has a thoroughly oppressive agenda (supporting terrorism against innocent civilians, promoting the rights of husbands to beat their wives and the execution of gays), the MAB passes itself off as oppressed so convincingly that it has fooled the PC establishment, notably the *Guardian*, *Independent* and BBC, into promoting it unquestioningly.

In Britain, but more notably in the US, smokers and obese people are campaigning to achieve victim status. The smokers have an uphill battle, but groups representing

THE RETREAT OF REASON

obese people are succeeding in blaming everyone but themselves for their weight, and thus winning some sympathy as victims of society, and of discrimination.

The desire to become a victim can be so strong that, in extreme cases, people even fabricate evidence of victimhood. In the US, and France, there have been many well documented cases of people making up stories of racial attacks in order to engender sympathy. In one US case, a black teacher smashed up her own car and accused white racists of doing it. After witnesses said they saw her smash up her own car, she confessed, but still won widespread support because the principle of victimhood remains (the truth not being the ultimate defence for the politically correct).

When the creation of victim status coincides with direct financial rewards, the results can be explosive. Even race campaigners complain that it allows ‘knaves to use racism as a poison to destabilise and terrorise organisations’,¹ sometimes making false accusations of racism to extort money. In parts of the Ukraine, where officially recognised victims of the Chernobyl disaster were given free health treatment, accommodation, holidays and generous monthly benefits, half the population claimed they were victims of radiation, even though medical studies suggested the numbers were in the low thousands.² In parts of Wales, a quarter of the working population have succeeded in registering themselves as officially disabled in order to claim larger benefits.

Political correctness can lead to ‘competitive victimhood’, which leads to tensions between groups that were otherwise living harmoniously as they compete for prime victim status. Howard Schwartz noted that the ‘subordination of truth to goodness’ led to a situation where:

instead of competing for achievement, students come to engage in a competition for sympathy and even pity. By showing that they have been victimized, oppressed, abused, devalued in the past, the

THE DRAWBACKS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

students assert their claims to compensatory appreciation and resentfully depreciate the claims of others. From this standpoint, we can understand the development which balkanizes student bodies into hyphenated groups proclaiming their competing histories of oppression and grievance.

This emotionally charged conflict, when it takes place in our intendedly multicultural universities, undoubtedly is a source of constant surprise, perplexity, and sadness to the well-meaning individuals who have given rise to it. But by establishing narcissism as the norm for university life, PC advocates made it inevitable that the actual university would be the locus of bitterness, envy and ill-will. Resentment and hostility are not just temporary feelings which will be outgrown in the PC university; they are built into its very structure.³

Perverse Incentives: the Rewarding of Vice and the Punishing of Virtue

Almost by its very nature, political correctness undermines the age-old incentive structure that has driven progress in society, whereby virtues such as hard work, discipline and education are rewarded with success and wealth, and lack of such virtues is punished by failure and poverty. In contrast, political correctness rewards victim status, encouraging people to strive to be recognised as victims, and scorns (and sometime even encourages discrimination against) successful people who are deemed oppressors.

By encouraging people to strive for the bottom rather than the top, political correctness undermines one of the main driving forces for progress in society, the individual pursuit of self-improvement. Political correctness can be, quite literally, unprogressive.

Political correctness tells the weak and vulnerable that it is society that is wrong and needs changing, not themselves. Sometimes this is true, but just as often it is not.

If someone is poor because they are systematically oppressed by the rich, who distort laws to entrench their wealth and deny opportunities to the poor, then the

sentiments of political correctness are entirely right: the poor should be supported against the rich, and laws should be challenged.

If, however, someone is poor because they are lazy, ill-disciplined, addicted to benefits and resentful of those who aren't poor, then encouraging them to blame other people rather than emulating them, and supporting their self-inflicted harm through generous benefits, will in fact just perpetuate their poverty. Political correctness can entrench poverty rather than offer a route out. Blaming others will prevent them changing how they behave, which is the only way they can stop being vulnerable. By preventing uncomfortable self-examination and justifying self-harming behaviour, political correctness harms those that it purports to support.

Someone who is poor for these self-inflicted reasons needs the precise opposite of political correctness: they need to be encouraged to copy others, rather than blame them, and they need their self-harming behaviour and attitudes to be challenged rather than comforted.

Probably the most extreme example is that of Australian aborigines, whose initiative and sense of responsibility and self-reliance has been destroyed by the very generous welfare benefits thrown at them by white Australian society as some form of compensation for stealing the country from their ancestors. However great the historic injustices inflicted on aborigines, the current policy, which has turned whole communities into benefit junkies reliant on the state, has done far more harm than good, leading to high unemployment and alcoholism. The policy continued for a long time, supported by political correctness, with opponents routinely denounced for racism. Only recently have the failures of the policy become widely accepted, not least among aboriginal leaders themselves—but only after severe damage has been done.

THE DRAWBACKS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Political correctness encourages the black community to blame racism by teachers for the underachievement of black boys in schools, rather than tackle the ‘all gold chains and no brains’ (as Trevor Phillips, the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, called it) culture of underachievement that many leading black educationalists believe is the true cause of failure. It is notable that many of the most successful blacks in Britain are from Ghanaian families, who tend to stress traditional values of the importance of education, achievement and self-respect, rather than inculcating a pervasive sense of victimhood. Condoleezza Rice did not rise from poverty in segregated Alabama to become both the most powerful black person and one of the most powerful women in the world by blaming others for her problems (although she would have had much right to), but by hard work, self-discipline and taking responsibility for her own life. If she had concentrated instead on telling the world how hard it is to be a black woman, she almost certainly would not have become the US’s first black woman Secretary of State.

In the US, the widespread use of historical slavery as an excuse for failure merely inculcates a defeatist sense of victimhood that may be emotionally comforting in the short term, but does nothing to help African Americans take what steps they can to improve their own lives. As one black New York comedian joked to me: ‘I just hate people who use slavery as a crutch.’

The most successful blind person in Britain, the former Home Secretary David Blunkett, achieved cabinet position by overcoming his blindness, rather than eliciting sympathy by succumbing to it.

Persistently blaming the West for many of the Third World’s problems discourages Third World countries from facing up to the fact that many, and perhaps most, of their problems are self-inflicted. As China, India, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia have shown, the key to development is largely in a country’s own hands. The

world's most failing countries, in the Arab world and Africa, are the ones that most blatantly avoid their own responsibility for their plight by blaming it on the West.

Development aid has a poor record of promoting economic development, and often inculcates cultures of corruption and dependency among governments. Writing off Third World debt can cause a 'moral hazard' that encourages excessive and irresponsible borrowing by governments. Stressing the importance of aid and debt relief may reduce Western guilt, but risks diverting attention from the more important hindrances to development, which in the long run are bad governance, lack of rule of law, corruption, poor education, poor healthcare, excessive bureaucracy, socialism and distorted international trade laws.

The War against Freedom of Speech

The most worrying aspect of political correctness is its success in stifling opposing beliefs.

At its most basic, the censorship is self-imposed. Political correctness succeeds by attaching a sense of moral superiority to itself, and a sense of shame to opposing beliefs. This sense of shame becomes internalised, so that people feel ashamed if they publicly state politically incorrect beliefs, even if they believe them.

Likewise, people feel morally superior opposing political incorrectness, and so feel righteousness in trying to silence the politically incorrect. While the politically incorrect preface themselves with: 'I know I shouldn't say this, but...', the politically correct respond: 'You shouldn't say that!' The politically correct enforce the censorship with powerfully silencing accusations of 'sexism', 'homophobia', 'racism' and 'fascism'. They are widely inappropriately applied, because the aim is not an accurate analysis, but merely to silence opposing views.

THE DRAWBACKS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

The politically correct have long pursued 'no platform' policies for those they disagree with, from universities to national TV. Style guides have been introduced for civil servants, police officers and journalists to weed out unacceptable patterns of speech and use of language.

University grant-givers, notably the Economic and Social Research Council, support an almost entirely politically-correct agenda, creating an academic body of work that reinforces politically correct belief. An academic is far more likely to get funding for a project aimed at promoting the benefits of immigration, rather than one wanting to honestly examine its problems.

Even when men were overwhelmingly underachieving compared with women at all levels of the education system, and were twice as likely to be unemployed, three times as likely to commit suicide, three times as likely to be a victim of violent crime, four times as likely to be a drug addict, three times as likely to be alcoholic and nine times as likely to be homeless, the Economic and Social Research Council was still almost exclusively funding work that looked at the problems faced by women. Although men surpass women at almost every measure of social failure, admitting that men also have serious problems simply doesn't fit the politically correct paradigm, and all such research was avoided until it became impossible to deny the 'crisis of masculinity' any longer. University research departments that are meant to extend human understanding end up merely buttressing pre-held beliefs.

One tactic of political correctness is to follow the Orwellian Newspeak approach of trying to eliminate thoughts by eliminating the words, or even unintended associations. Handicapped turns to disabled, black market to shadow market. Many such 'politically correct' language changes merely reflect social changes. Others, however, reflect the determination to find offence where there is none, leading to a semantic wild goose chase,

whereby Negro is replaced by Black is replaced by African American is replaced by Person of Colour is replaced by...

Codes of conduct are also used to uphold politically-correct beliefs. Newspapers are bound not to mention the race of a criminal on the grounds that it is 'irrelevant', although they are not banned from mentioning equally irrelevant facts like age, height, or favourite hobbies, and they are not banned from mentioning 'irrelevant' facts such as race when it applies to the Asian business awards, Britain's Black History Month, Halle Berry winning an Oscar or Paul Boateng becoming a cabinet minister.

The politically correct strive to uphold their values by getting those who break them sacked. There are countless examples, with just two of the most high profile being Ray Honeyford, the Bradford head teacher, who was sacked for saying British Asian children should learn English (which is now government policy), and the TV presenter Robert Kilroy-Silk. The demands that the politically incorrect be sacked succeed because of the fear of 'guilt by association', which stops many sympathisers of the offender publicly offering support.

The politically correct belief in censorship can run so deep that the politically correct sometimes justify murder and incitement to murder as a way of suppressing freedom of speech. Many on the left in Britain supported the Ayatollah of Iran's call to murder Salman Rushdie for insulting Islam, and some suggested that the Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh deserved to be killed by an Islamic radical because he was so offensive about Islam.

Even in Western countries with a tradition of freedom of speech, laws have been introduced to curb people saying politically incorrect things. In the Netherlands, a man was jailed for saying 'the Netherlands was full' (an eminently sensible thing to say of Europe's most densely populated country, which has virtually no unspoilt countryside left) on the grounds that it was inciting racial

hatred. France has laws criminalising insulting vulnerable minorities such as homosexuals and Muslims (leading to the prosecution of the novelist Michel Houellebecq for saying Islam was ‘stupid’ in an interview). In Britain there are laws for inciting racial hatred (which for some reason don’t apply to Michael Moore’s book *Stupid White Men*, even though it clearly incites hatred against whites), and at the time of writing the Labour government are copying an Australian law to criminalise inciting religious hatred, which its advocates hope will curb criticism of Islam.

Free speech is never an absolute. From a gang boss saying ‘kill him’, to a passenger shouting ‘I’ve got a bomb’ on a plane, the freedom to say something cannot be free from responsibility for the consequences. Speech should be curtailed only if it is intended AND likely to cause physical violence, or gravely threatens national security, but political correctness has moved the limitations on free speech beyond that. It has started criminalising speech that merely causes offence, or incites not violence but an emotion (hatred).

The effect is to curb sensitive debates, and to tie police up in countless investigations of commentators. Ann Robinson was investigated for asking what the point of the Welsh was, Robin Page (former presenter of the BBC TV programme *One Man and His Dog*) was arrested overnight for saying he thought countryfolk should have the same rights as other minorities, and Taki was investigated by the Metropolitan Police for insulting black criminals in the *Spectator*.

A country that has long prided itself on its freedom of speech has been reduced by political correctness to a country where, despite endemic levels of violent crime, police spend time investigating and arresting leading writers and broadcasters for what they write and say.

Although political correctness has led to widespread ‘speech crimes’, it often drifts into the Orwellian ‘thought crimes’. Members of the British National Party, a legal

democratic political party, have been banned from being civil servants, and can be banned from membership of trade unions. The BNP is odious (as I have written many times), but a civil servant being sacked for being a member of the BNP is being sacked not for anything they have done or even said, but presumed to think.

The creation of 'thought crimes' became almost self-parodic when the *Guardian* trumpeted a machine that could detect whether or not police recruits had racist thoughts. Police racism is damaging to individuals and society, but these recruits would be barred from entering the force not for what they actually say or do, but because of what an electric machine believes they think. George Orwell, where are you?

The politically correct have been highly successful in curbing free speech despite the overwhelming historical evidence that a successful, modern, democratic society can only be built on free speech, when public differences of opinion are fought over with words rather than police investigations. In many ways it is an indictment of the politically correct: if they were more confident of their arguments, they wouldn't be so frightened of debate.

The fear of open public debate about 'their territory' was shown by the *Independent* newspaper's response to the launch of Migrationwatch. Rather than welcoming a group that might balance the very one-sided public debate, the *Independent* said it was a nasty group that 'deserved to close'.

Commenting on the Blair government's attempt to win Muslim votes by criminalising incitement to religious hatred, which Muslim leaders hope will criminalise criticism of Islam, Salman Rushdie wrote:

To me it is merely further evidence that in Britain, just as in the United States, we may need to fight the battle for the Enlightenment all over again. That battle, you may remember, was about the church's desire to place limits on thought. Diderot's novel *La Religieuse*, with its portrayal of nuns and their behavior,

THE DRAWBACKS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

was deliberately blasphemous: It challenged religious authority, with its indexes and inquisitions, on what was possible to say. Most of our contemporary ideas about freedom of speech and imagination come from the Enlightenment. But although we may have thought the battle long since won, if we aren't careful, it is about to be 'un-won'.⁴

So far has the concept of freedom of speech been forgotten, that the words of John Stuart Mill from a hundred and fifty years ago have a sobering effect on the modern mind:

The time, it is to be hoped, is gone by, when any defence would be necessary of the 'liberty of the press' as one of the securities against corrupt or tyrannical government. No argument, we may suppose, can now be needed, against permitting a legislature or an executive, not identified in interest with the people, to prescribe opinions to them, and determine what doctrines or what arguments they shall be allowed to hear.⁵

Inability to Confront Problems

The stifling of public debate, the preference for emotional comfort over reason, and for political correctness over factual correctness, can often make it very difficult for policy makers to deal with growing problems. The widespread systematic abuse of the asylum system by people smugglers was not confronted for many years after it became obvious because political correctness made it almost impossible for politicians to be honest about the problem. Rather than helping ethnic minorities, political correctness resulted in a notable deterioration in race relations in Britain.

The same applies to the heterosexual HIV epidemic that is being imported to Britain by African immigration, tripling the rate of HIV. For a long time, the issue was not addressed because doctors found it too difficult to talk about. Government epidemiologists and ministers buried their heads for as long as possible, because it was the easiest thing to do, with the government employing a Kenyan epidemiologist to be their spokesman on the issue

to avoid accusations of racism. Despite a government inquiry warning of the explosive scale of the problem, and recommending US and Australia-style immigration health tests, the government chose not to act, because, as one cabinet minister said, ‘this is not what I entered politics for’.

Other issues that political correctness has made it difficult to confront include the educational failings of boys, and of black boys in particular; female genital mutilation; forced marriages; the growth of unintegrated parallel societies of ethnic minorities; welfare dependency; school discipline; NHS reform; asserting Britain’s interest in the European Union; and rising crime, in particular street crime.

Now, one of the biggest issues facing Britain is the rise of radical Islam among Britain’s growing Muslim communities. The politically correct response—and that of the British government—is to pander to Islamic militancy by, for example, curbing the freedom to debate Islam, creating tax-funded Islamic schools and campaigning for Muslim Turkey to be admitted as the biggest member of the European Union. The best way to combat Islamic extremism—more free speech—is the one thing that PC undermines.

No country has yet been destroyed by political correctness—although the Netherlands has come close—but the ingredients are there.

Undermining Democracy

Once political correctness becomes hegemonic, the higher up the power and social structure someone is, the more pressure they are under to abide by politically-correct taboos, and the more they will be isolated from their peers if they break them.

THE DRAWBACKS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

As a result, political correctness leads to a huge gulf between elites and commoners, between those who govern and those who are governed.

Although nearly half of the British want to leave the European Union, the fear of being called a little Englander means that not a single Member of Parliament publicly supports withdrawal (although a few do privately). Despite the government's official and the BBC's unofficial policy of promoting mass immigration, opinion polls show 80 per cent of British think there is too much immigration. In almost all western countries, political correctness has undermined democracy's ability to reflect public concern on this issue.

The British public are also generally opposed to multiculturalism, firmly believing that those who come here should try to integrate with British society and culture, rather than isolating themselves in parallel societies. Only recently, after parallel societies started producing murderous terrorists bent on destroying the country, have politicians dared promote the benefits of social cohesion.

Despite tough talking by many governments on the issue of crime, policies over recent decades have generally supported the rights of criminals, whether making it easier for them to avoid being convicted, or emphasising rehabilitation rather than punishment. This has led to a very low conviction rate, the proliferation of repeat offenders, and absurdities such as burglars having the right to sue householders if they are injured during a burglary.

This emphasis by elites on the rights of criminals is in stark contrast to a public so frustrated with endemic crime that it is overwhelmingly retributive in its attitudes to criminals. When the BBC Today programme held a poll of its readers to choose one policy which a Labour MP Stephen Pound said he would adopt as a private member's bill, the listeners chose the right of homeowners to use any force to defend their properties when invaded by burglars.

Faced with this political incorrectness, Mr Pound withdrew his offer, declaring: 'The people have spoken, the bastards!'⁶

Being less affected by political correctness, and thus being able to think more logically, the general public are on many issues far wiser than their leaders. Intellectuals are often not wiser than non-intellectuals, just better at sophistry and so better able to create such convincing specious arguments on why black is really white that they believe it themselves.

Just as political correctness's soft opposition to freedom of speech is sometimes hardened into censorship, so political correctness's soft opposition to representative democracy is hardened into outlawing certain political parties.

As mentioned earlier, the Labour government are proscribing membership of the legal democratic party the BNP for certain groups of people such as civil servants, and there are many on the left who want to ban the BNP altogether. Nick Griffin, the BNP leader, was arrested by police in a dawn raid on his Welsh farm on allegations of hate speech.

In Belgium, the Vlaams Blok political party was declared illegal by the Supreme Court for breaching laws against racism, despite the fact that it is the most popular political party in the Flemish half of the country. In Australia, the leading anti-multiculturalism politician, Pauline Hanson, was imprisoned for her speeches.

The European Union imposed sanctions on Austria, in effect blocking it from taking part in EU politics, when its citizens elected Jorg Haider, the leader of the far-right Freedom Party, to government. Sometimes, the politically correct left take more extreme actions in their determination to prevent democracy—the anti-immigrant politician Pym Fortuyn was murdered by a left-wing animal rights activist to stop him becoming prime minister.

One must be very disillusioned with democracy not to find it at least slightly unsettling that in Europe in the twenty-first century government employees are being banned from joining certain legal political parties but not others, legal democratic party leaders are being arrested in dawn raids for what they have said, and political parties leading the polls are being banned by judges.

As James C. Bennett, the author and fellow of the Hudson Institute, wrote: ‘of democracy, immigration and multiculturalism, we must pick from any two’.⁷ Which two would you like?

Political Instability

The stifling of freedom of speech, the undermining of democracy by creating a gulf between the ruled and the rulers, and the inability to confront nascent problems are a potent set of ingredients created by political correctness that can lead to political instability even in the most apparently stable countries.

The closing down of political debate does not deal with problems, but allows them to fester and grow. Self-censorship in the media does not stop people seeing things with their own eyes, and talking about them within the privacy of their own homes. If mainstream parties don’t address public concern, extremist parties, not worried about the pariah status of being politically incorrect, will step into the vacuum between the ruled and the rulers. Banning extremist political parties does not deal with public concern, but merely suppresses the political expression of it.

The closing down of normal democratic pressure valves can lead to explosive tensions in society, as the Netherlands most spectacularly found with the phenomenal rise and assassination of Pim Fortuyn. After his death, his party, Fortuyn’s List, smashed the cosy consensual politics of the country which had determinedly

THE RETREAT OF REASON

blocked all discussion of the effects of mass immigration, and soon almost all mainstream parties, including those on the left, adopted his policies. Within two years, the Islam critic and film-maker Theo van Gogh was murdered by an Islamic extremist in the Netherlands, prompting a wave of religious violence that saw mosques, churches and schools burnt down. The Netherlands has been turned from one of the most socially cohesive countries in the world, where the prime minister could ride a bicycle in public, to one where Muslim and non-Muslim communities live in fear of each other.

In the Netherlands, political correctness undermined the functioning of its liberal democracy to such an extent that it was no longer able to debate and tackle serious and growing problems until the tensions were so great in society that they exploded. It would have been far better if the problems had been openly discussed and addressed as they arose, diffusing tensions rather than exacerbating them.

Nor is the Netherlands alone. Other countries, such as Denmark, have suffered similar, if smaller scale, political earthquakes. Belgium seems to be heading for a similar political explosion, with the Vlaams Berlang (the relaunched Vlaams Blok after it was banned) growing steadily in popularity on the issues of independence for the Flemish region and immigration.