

Shaking the Foundations: will we stand or fall?

Address by David van Gend to the Toowoomba branch of *Australians for Constitutional Monarchy*
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Introduction by Marie Keen, vice-president of ACM Toowoomba branch

Dr David van Gend has been a Toowoomba GP for 24 years, a university lecturer in palliative medicine for 15 years, a father of three Toowoomba boys and a leading voice on the great issues of conscience that have come before our parliaments in the last quarter century.

Most recently, he was president of the Australian Marriage Forum and wrote a best-selling book that laid out the 'No' case on same-sex marriage. Prior to that, for 27 years he has headed up a doctor's group that defends the traditional western medical ethic, and he directed Australians for Ethical Stem Cell Research in opposition to human cloning.

David has advised politicians in state and federal parliaments and has appeared before eight Senate enquiries. In 2006 he addressed a group of United States Senators in Washington and the same year he was featured by the journal *Australian Doctor* as "one of Australia's 50 most intriguing GPs".

David has debated opponents on major TV and radio forums such as ABC *Lateline*, *7.30 Report*, SBS *Insight* and the *Kerri-Anne show*, and has written for *The Australian*, *The Courier Mail*, *Herald Sun*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Quadrant* magazine, *News Weekly* and other papers. You can catch his articles in the *Spectator Australia* and occasional interviews on Sky News.

Today, David wants to dig around the foundations of the monarchy and British culture and ask whether there's enough Anglo-Saxon stubbornness left in us to defend the liberties they won for us.

His topic: *Shaking the Foundations: will we stand or fall?*

Foundation of the English-speaking world

It is clear, ladies and gentlemen, that there is a concerted effort to trash western civilisation in general, and British colonial history in particular, smearing great men as racists and toppling their statues. These are unstable times for western democracies; the ancient foundations of our individual liberty and national sovereignty are being shaken. It is unclear whether we will stand or fall.

Knowing the sources of our strength may help us to stand firm. I think it is vital to understand why Anglo-Saxon / British culture, of which we are heirs, has been the most consistent champion of liberty throughout the world and the most resolute in asserting sovereignty against tyranny.

One strength is our deep foundation in time. When the future King George V opened the first Commonwealth parliament in 1901, Australia was already a thousand-year-old monarchy.

When my grandparents attended the Queen's Coronation in 1953 as representatives of Northern Rhodesia, the oath they heard Queen Elizabeth take was little changed from the coronation oath of King Edgar a thousand years earlier in 973 AD.

In turn, Edgar's anointing as king was modelled on the anointing of King Solomon two thousand years earlier – hence every English coronation in the last three hundred years has featured Handel's anthem: "Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king".

This is another strength: our culture's deep foundation in a transcendent faith. The only moment at the Queen's coronation that was hidden from the television viewer was the anointing, as that was deemed a sacred moment between the monarch and God; the Queen, of course, being the head of the Church of England and "defender of the faith".

And as you excavate down into two thousand years of Christian civilisation among the English-speaking people, you find another great strength: an unwavering conviction that individual liberty must triumph over the tyranny of Kings, and that all are equal before the law and under God.

Historians say this fierce passion for freedom and a fair go came with the Saxons, marauding Germanic tribes, possibly Arian Christians, who pulled their long boats up on the shores of Britannica as the Roman Empire faded. The early Roman historian, Tacitus, penned an account of these barbarians beyond the empire's borders. In his book, *Germania*, he amazed his fellow Romans with the description of primitive tribes deciding their affairs through public gatherings and debate, whose chiefs held their position not by force of arms but by consent of the tribal elders.

In dark age Anglo-Saxon Britain, this proud tradition of tribal self-government took the form of the Witan assembly, "the great men of the kingdom", who we know chose the King of England from at least the ninth century. And the King had to stick to the agreed contract with the people: so, in the coronation oath of King Edgar in 973, he promised "to defend the land, uphold its laws, protect its church, and rule justly". All monarchs from Edgar to Elizabeth have vowed much the same - except for the disaster of the Norman invasion of 1066, when the freemen of rural England with their privately-owned farms and their ancient system of self-government were subjected to feudal servitude by the hated William the Conqueror. It was a full six hundred years before the English felt they had finally thrown off the Norman yoke, in the glorious revolution of 1688, but throughout that time the smouldering pride of the Saxons lived on in the common law of the people, still administered at shire and parish level.

Rudyard Kipling captures this stubborn Saxon passion for justice in a poem that might give us a clue as to the origins of the great Aussie sense of a Fair Go. It is a letter from a Norman father to his son, advising him how to manage the natives back on the estate in England:

"My son," said the Norman Baron, "I am dying, and you will be heir
To all the broad acres in England that William gave me for my share
When we conquered the Saxon at Hastings, and a nice little handful it is.
But before you go over to rule it I want you to understand this:
"The Saxon is not like us Normans. His manners are not so polite.
But he never means anything serious till he talks about justice and right.
When he stands like an ox in the furrow with his sullen set eyes on your own,
And grumbles, 'This isn't fair dealing,' my son, leave the Saxon alone."

Much of the history of the freedom-loving Anglo-Saxons has been the story of dealing with bad monarchs who violated their contract with the people. British MP and historian Daniel Hannan wrote a splendid book, “How we invented freedom and why it matters”, and he traces this theme of dealing with difficult monarchs from King Æthelred the Unredy in the eleventh century right through to the rebellious American colonies in the 18th:

By 1014, a series of disasters had overtaken the English. The Danes had seized London, forcing Æthelred to flee into exile... What happened next was, at that time, without precedent in the world. The Witan offered Æthelred the chance to return to his throne only if he agreed to abide by their conditions. Specifically, there were to be no more excessive taxes. The old laws—the first appearance of that English notion of “immemorial custom” or “the good old laws”—must be upheld. And the King must pledge to be guided by the counsel of the Witan in future. It was a remarkable ... development. When tracing the story of constitutional liberty in the English-speaking world, specifically in the form of the assertion of representative government over monarchy, historians point to Magna Carta ... to the English Civil War, to the Glorious Revolution, and, finally, to the American Revolution. Yet here, fully two centuries before Magna Carta, we find a foreshadowing of the Glorious Revolution of 1688: a king being invited conditionally to the throne. The law is deemed to be bigger than he is.”

The perennial assertion of Anglo-Saxon liberty is that the law is bigger than any tyrant; we the people make the law through our representatives according to principles of justice and we are all equal before that law. As the American founding father John Adams put it, we are to have “a government of laws, not of men”.

And so with Magna Carta, the Great Charter of Liberties of 1215, bad King John and his abuses had to be brought to heel by the Barons at Runnymede. You remember AA Milne’s poem that starts: *‘King John was not a good man - he had his little ways, And sometimes no one spoke to him for days and days and days...’* Thanks to this bad monarch, the world got the foundational document upon which government of the people by the people for the people would gradually be constructed.

With the English Civil War of the 1640s, the monarch, Charles I, was beheaded by Cromwell's parliamentarians after the King had grossly abused his powers. The sentence of death in 1649 read that the King was guilty of attempting to "uphold in himself an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will, and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people". He should have left the Saxon alone...

In the rest of Europe in the seventeenth century, the royal push to abolish councils of the people was hugely successful, but not in the land of the Saxon, the Witan and Magna Carta. The ultimate assertion of people power in England came with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. James II was exiled and legislation passed such that all future monarchs were subject to the will of Parliament, sworn to govern "according to the Statutes in Parliament agreed on and the Laws and Customs of the same".

In the same spirit of defending "the rights and liberties of the people", the British colonies in America in 1776 rebelled against King George III - again, as with Æthelred and King John, largely over unjust taxation - declaring Independence in words that asserted the Anglo-Saxon passion of individual liberty under law and under God:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The American revolution was the second English civil war, with English values at stake that resonate all the way back to the early Saxons. King George III was again the tyrant breaking his contract with the people, and he had to be put in his place.

And so by these struggles over a thousand years, the culture of individual liberty, rule of law and a ferocious sense of the 'fair go' were defended and the institution of a well-behaved constitutional monarchy was established.

This curious institution, which all Australians are blessed to live under, is a creation of political genius; one that we must cherish, because it deals better than any other system with the problem of power.

Under a constitutional monarchy, there is no elected president with supreme executive power and all the abuses and political divisiveness that come with it; there is only a prime minister who can be changed by a simple vote of his fellow MPs – witness the last fifteen years in Australia, a period which demonstrates a principle of democratic hygiene: that politicians, like nappies, should be changed frequently; and often for the same reason.

Under a constitutional monarchy, power percolates upwards from the Parliament and the Prime Minister to the real symbol of headship and unity: the Crown – in our case, the Governor-General as representative of the Queen. And there, power simply evaporates harmlessly, since the Crown has no real power other than to say no to gross abuses by Prime Ministers.

This system is all about limiting power, since the Anglo-Saxon mind, steeped in a Christian worldview, knows that humans are corrupt and power will corrupt them further. The solution that has grown to maturity over centuries is our Westminster system with division of powers between executive, legislature and judiciary so as to limit the power of each division; all placed under a house-trained constitutional monarch who has all of the glory but none of the power.

This system, this political attitude, exported throughout the British empire and adopted in republican form by nations, such as in the former Soviet bloc, who love the idea of “the rights and liberties of the people” and limiting executive power, has been the greatest gift of British culture to the world.

And these values are obviously open to all, not just those of Anglo-Saxon stock. Daniel Hannan writes:

Anglo-Saxon values, as Richard Dawkins might put it, are a meme rather than a gene. They can be transmitted without any genetic vehicle. They explain why Bermuda is not Haiti, why Singapore is not Indonesia, why Hong Kong is not China.

But does the next generation appreciate what a heritage of liberty we have inherited? There is an urgent need, I think, to get some justice and balance back in our judgment of history. We need to give our forebears a fair go.

Giving our forebears a fair go

To counter this unjust caricature of our history as racist and oppressive, I think of two statues that have not been toppled, and ones that I have particular concern for because they are in my family. These two statues commemorate the best white brothers the black man ever had. They counter the Marxist *#BlackLivesMatter* movement's demoralising slander of our culture as 'racist' and say what needs saying: that our colonial history has as much honour as shame.

My three-greats grandfather Robert Moffat, whose memorial stands in Ormiston, Scotland, founded a real *#BlackLivesMatter* movement two hundred years ago in the Kalahari desert. For fifty years he served the Tswana people at Kuruman, enduring dangers and privations that today's pampered protesters know nothing of. He stood with the Africans against the marauding Boers; he taught them agriculture and freed them from the spiritual terror of the witch doctor; he brought a printing press to the desert and produced the first New Testament in an African tongue, because *#BlackSoulsMatter*. He also brought out a young medical missionary, David Livingstone, whom he met during a fund-raising tour of Britain in 1840. He writes:

By and by he asked whether I thought he would do for Africa. I said I believed he would, if he would not go to an old station but would advance to unoccupied ground, specifying the vast plain to the north where I had sometimes seen, in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary had ever been.

Livingstone trained at Kuruman, proposing to Moffat's daughter Mary under the almond tree – you can still see the stump. Then it was off north to the smoke of a thousand villages and the smouldering foulness of the Arab trade in African slaves, the destruction of which became Livingstone's lifework. His statue still stands by Victoria Falls; the Africans know who their friends are.

Those decades saw the English-speaking world achieve the greatest movement for moral good in any culture in any age, as they exorcised the ancient evil of slavery. Someone should build a statue to these dead white males.

In 1833, Christian Britain passed Wilberforce's *Emancipation Act*, abolishing slavery throughout the Empire. From the 1850s to 1870s, Livingstone used his growing fame to pressure the British government to send in troops to drive out the Arab slave traders. Across the Atlantic in 1865, Abraham Lincoln's troops cauterised the open sore of slavery in the South; tragically, Livingstone's eldest son Robert died in Lincoln's army as a prisoner of the Confederates.

So much for the good guys, but what about Cecil Rhodes, that arch-villain of imperialism? His statue at Oxford, where he was a one-term dropout and incomparable benefactor to students of all races, triggered the *#RhodesMustFall* campaign as the prototype of all subsequent topplings.

Livingstone's brother-in-law, my two-greats grandfather John Smith Moffat, became a fierce opponent of Rhodes after the mining magnate violated a treaty with Moffat's friend, Chief Lobengula. Others shared Moffat's low opinion of Rhodes: Mark Twain said, 'I admire him, I frankly confess it; and when his time comes, I shall buy a piece of the rope for a keepsake.'

Yet there was obvious greatness in Rhodes, as historian Paul Johnson acknowledged, with his passion for extending the benefits of British civilisation 'from Cape to Cairo'. There were glimpses of goodness; he quietly funded the education of Lobengula's son, Njuba, and race was never a criterion for his scholarships. There was courage; in the second Matabele war he walked unarmed into the Chief's stronghold to urge an end to hostilities. He earned respect from former enemies; at his burial in their lands in 1902, the warrior-heirs of Lobengula gave the royal salute and even Robert Mugabe preserved his grave as an essential part of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe's history.

Should small self-righteous students be allowed to topple Rhode's statue at Oxford; students who have done nothing more courageous in their life than shout 'f— the police' at rallies; students who condemn Rhode's claim of British cultural supremacy while urging the state-enforced supremacy of Greta's green globalism and a borderless, genderless Gaia; shabby students who condemn their forebears for taking profit from slaves while taking pleasure themselves from present-day slaves trafficked in the porn fields of the internet?

It is precisely because of decades of cultural self-loathing instilled in such students that the perverse Western urge to topple our past is now so strong. True, 'there is a great deal of ruin in a nation', as Adam Smith said, because there is a great deal of ruin in each of us who make up the nation. But there is also great good. The one-sided dwelling on cultural failings is a sickness, possibly terminal, and needs radical treatment.

I suggest an eye transplant. Let's give our young people different eyes for looking at our nation's history: eyes of compassion instead of morbid rage. Only compassion can look steadily at the shame and the honour of a nation (or a person) and still find reason to love and pity it – precisely because it understands that all history, being human, is a tragic mix of striving for good and sinking into evil. That's the way we are. Let him who is without sin topple the first statue.

And as one of the statues targeted for toppling in the quest to topple western civilisation, let's hear from Sir Winston Churchill on the British idea of civilisation. He says,

“Civilization” ... means a society based upon the opinion of civilians. It means that violence, the rule of warriors and despotic chiefs ... of riot and tyranny, give place to parliaments where laws are made, and independent courts of justice in which over long periods those laws are maintained. That is Civilization—and in its soil grow continually freedom, comfort, and culture.

Civilisation as “a society based upon the opinion of civilians”: not on the approved and enforced opinion of the elite in their globalist institutions or their social media monopolies or their 'anti-discrimination' tribunals; not on the rule of the #BLM mob tearing down anything they don't like or can't understand. It means a society where all citizens are free to express their opinion through free public argument and settle their disputes through parliament and the courts; a society committed to the sovereign task of running our own show with our own laws created by our own representatives – not by any external power.

All we can do, as civilians confronted by these subversive attacks on our culture, is to argue our case. The various forces that hate our western, British, Christian heritage are relentless in undermining its foundations; we have to shore up those foundations.

So let's consider two current assaults on the two main foundations of our political culture: individual liberty and national sovereignty. And let's argue in their defense.

Foundation of liberty

Four hundred years ago the poet John Milton appealed to the British Parliament not to enact laws that would prohibit the publication of certain political and religious opinions. Milton's address ended with the declaration: "Give me the liberty to argue freely according to conscience, *above all liberties*".

Free speech, meaning free argument, is at the heart of a self-governing society. It is the liberty by which we argue for all our other liberties. It should not be a partisan issue. As the greatest free-speech warrior of the West, Mark Steyn, has said: "Free speech is not a left-right thing; it is a free-unfree thing".

And yet the liberty to argue freely according to conscience is being constricted throughout the western world in the name of a new and bogus "right not to be offended". Mark Steyn speaks from experience:

In Canada, I committed the crime of "offending" certain approved identity groups. And there is no defense to that: truth, facts, evidence are all irrelevant. If someone's "offended", that's that: You're guilty.

Thanks to Steyn's magnificent push-back against the Canadian "human rights" establishment, the Canadian Parliament repealed the vilification law under which he was harassed.

In Australia that remains unfinished business.

Two friends of mine are presently being harassed under ‘vilification laws’ for ‘offending’ an approved identity group. Both men have criticised the more lurid aspects of LGBTQ culture and both men are being taken to court by exponents of that culture because they felt ‘offended’.

Exponent A is one Diamond Good-Rim, host of Drag Queen Story Time for kiddies at Brisbane City Council libraries. ‘Rim’ refers, of course, to the anus and ‘good’ affirms its homosexual utility. ‘Diamond’ might refer to the big diamond ring adorning the long sculptured penis on this Drag Queen’s Facebook page. Facebook might be exactly the place kids will visit to learn more about their colourful entertainer. And once there, they will see that Diamond also entertains adults – indeed, as the queen of classy porn: winner of the 2019 Adult Entertainment Industry XAward, Drag Queen category.

Friend A is one Lyle Shelton, who headed the No case on same-sex marriage and exposed the background of Diamond Good-Rim and another drag queen storyteller, Queeny, at his blog in January last year. Lyle gave his opinion about Brisbane City Council inviting a penis-posting porn star to address school children: he opined that “Queeny & Good-Rim are dangerous role models for children”.

For that word ‘dangerous’, Lyle is being dragged by the queens before the Queensland cadre of the Thought Police, the Anti-Discrimination Council, for alleged trans-vilification. Mr Shelton writes: ‘I will not be apologising. I will not be taking my blog down. I will not amend it.’ Spoken like a true Saxon!

Lyle acknowledges that his recalcitrance means the Commission can hand him over to the Tribunal who can issue a fine and send him to re-education camp; when he refuses, they can hand him over to Her Majesty’s jailer. At which point, we will need to crowd-fund Lyle’s case to the High Court to see if their Honours think government agencies should be used by activists to intimidate a conservative’s constitutional freedom of political communication.

For it is always and only conservatives who are targeted under our ‘offence’ laws. That is due to the cunning bias of laws that forbid the causing of offence on matters sexual: progressives

are sexually permissive and say no to nothing, so they never cause offence; conservatives hold to traditional values and must say no to some things sexual, so they always cause offence.

The genius of the anti-discrimination apparatus is that it appears neutral but only censors conservatives.

Friend B is another conservative, former army Major Bernie Gaynor, who has stared down not one but 37 worthless complaints over seven years from the one gay activist, defeating 33 of these cases with just four still to be dealt with. He has won at the High Court, proving that the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board has operated outside the law in their persecution of him — but still the Board continues to accept complaints from the same activist.

Which is more shocking? That a Brisbane father has had to sell his home and use all his assets to fight, and win, against a vexatious litigant who has sent numerous emails wishing ruin on him and his family? Or that a statutory body responsible for impartial justice has instead, by unlawful means, aided and abetted this attempted ruining of a decent man? Or that nothing has been done by the government in New South Wales to stop this shameful abuse of process?

It has taken an outsider politician of rare principle to do something about this scandal. Mark Latham, head of One Nation in NSW, has tabled a bill that would require the NSW Board to throw out vexatious complaints at the outset, not after the accused has been ground through their mill.

Where is the heartfelt support for Latham's bill from the NSW Attorney-General? Every libertarian instinct should be revulsed by laws that allow one citizen to set wave upon wave of government lawyers onto another citizen for feeling 'offended'.

I have a dream, my friends, that my children will one day live in a nation where they hear a Coalition prime minister declare: 'Being offended is part of the price of freedom. Hearing things that offend is unavoidable in a society that governs itself by free argument, not by guns. Therefore, fellow citizens, take offence in your stride as part of your civic duty — or go live in a nice totalitarian society like China where there is no offence because thought and argument has

been crushed into a soulless, offenceless pulp.’ And then my children will see the Coalition abolish Labor’s ‘human rights’ apparatus that exists solely to suppress the human rights of freedom of thought, free speech and freedom of conscience.

Could that be achieved in this generation? In 2011, I took a motion to the LNP convention in Queensland, just a month after I had been taken, absurdly, to the Anti-Discrimination Commission by a vexatious gay activist who objected to my defence of natural marriage. The motion was strongly supported: ‘That the LNP repeal or amend s.124A of the *Anti-Discrimination Act* to prevent its misuse in suppressing free argument on matters of public importance.’

That became party policy, but when the LNP came to power, Premier Campbell Newman did nothing about s.124A. Is there no effective treatment for the cultural impotence of conservative politics? Is it caused by sitting too long on the fence?

So our first foundation of liberty - free speech, free argument on matters of public importance – has been subverted badly in Australia.

I say that we should repeal these state and federal laws along with their commissions and they will be found to have been unnecessary as well as unworthy. Where free speech strays into personal attack we already have laws against defamation and, ultimately, against incitement to violence. That is enough. Free speech, which means free argument, cannot be otherwise constrained without unmaning us as a free society.

Foundation of sovereignty

On the second great foundation, we first have to celebrate *Brexit* as a belated stirring of sovereign Anglo-Saxon pride, a revolt against having laws and taxes imposed once again by ‘foreign kings’, this time in Brussels, without the consent of the people.

But the chief architect of the Brexit victory, Nigel Farage, had no sooner celebrated this reclaiming of sovereignty from the European elite than he started warning about subjection to

the United Nations elite. Farrage told Rowan Dean on *Sky News* that there is only one political game in town: globalism versus democratic nationalism. And the process of globalist encroachment on national sovereignty is well advanced, as evidenced by this year's nakedly globalist, quasi-socialist project of the 'Great Reset', championed by all the great and powerful people from the UN, the World Economic Forum, the mega corporations as well as celebrities like Prince Charles and Pope Francis.

Under the Great Reset, we are told by the official material, 'You'll own nothing. And you'll be happy.' It is incredible that a delusional concept from Karl Marx can be repackaged by the global elite in the belief that the public has forgotten all the historic evil of actual socialist collectivism. Remember the communists' stated position that if they could achieve one thing from their manifesto it would be the abolition of private property; from that, all the other means of crushing the individual would surely follow.

The time is ripe for top-down revolution by the champagne socialists: the official video of the World Economic Forum promoting the Great Reset declares, "Capitalism as we know it, is dead". And in a sideswipe at the capitalist farmers of Australia, it tells the public, "You will eat much less meat. An occasional treat, not a staple, for the good of the environment."

Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, talks in revolutionary language unbecoming to a bureaucrat but quite consistent with his former job as socialist prime minister of Portugal. He says on the Great Reset video, "It is imperative that we reimagine, rebuild, redesign, reinvigorate and rebalance our world" and his justification is that there is no other way to cope with the dual catastrophe of the coronavirus pandemic and man-made climate change. The global panic over global warming is central to this globalist power grab, with Guterres telling us that "advancing the transition to net zero emissions" is an essential "element of the Great Reset".

Next on the Great Reset promotional video, to my dismay, we have our future monarch. Prince Charles tells us, "We need a shift in our economic model that places Nature, and our shift to net

zero, at the heart of how we operate... We are literally at the last hour and there is real urgency for action”.

“Literally at the last hour”?? This from the prince of whale-size exaggeration who had told a meeting of industry leaders and environmentalists in 2009 that “we have just 96 months left to save the world” from “irretrievable climate and ecosystem collapse”. When that excitable hyperbole expired in 2017, His Royal Highness issued a new a prophesy of doom in a speech to Commonwealth foreign ministers, July 2019. He said, “I am firmly of the view that the next 18 months will decide our ability to keep climate change to survivable levels and to restore nature to the equilibrium we need for our survival.”

That new 18-month deadline took us to January just past, the due date of the World Economic Forum ‘Great Reset’ conference. And as a spokesman for the Great Reset, here is Prince Charles doing yet another great reset of the apocalyptic timeline: “We are literally at the last hour and there is real urgency for action”.

It troubles me that the future King gave his Great Reset interview on Remembrance Day 2020, wearing a poppy, as if to borrow some of the gravitas of that day, but in my view desecrating it by association with a highly contentious political movement.

If Charles were to become King, will he be merely the latest in a long line of monarchs who seek to impose foreign ideas and regulations on his subjects without their consent? If so, beheading is probably not an option but exile to a pacific island to watch the shoreline failing to submerge or to Antarctica to watch the sea-ice failing to decline or to the Arctic to watch the polar bears failing to perish might be a suitable punishment.

Any serious citizen who treasures our national sovereignty has the duty to understand this globalist political movement - the great threat to democratic self-government, as Nigel Farrage reminded us. And that means understanding and judging the claims of man-made catastrophic climate change and the global quest for net zero CO2 emissions: a quest that would involve

submitting our nation's energy policy and therefore our economic policy and therefore the heart of our politics to unelected experts at the UN. A quest that would damage our economy and compromise our sovereignty while, in my considered view, doing nothing of importance for the environment.

Tony Abbott has recognised that the climate movement is just 'socialism masquerading as environmentalism' but the real voices of authority come from those who understand socialism firsthand. Vaclav Klaus lived under a totalitarian regime and became President of the Czech Republic. He says,

Twenty years ago we still felt threatened by the remnants of communism. This is really over. I feel threatened now, not by global warming – I don't see any – but by the global warming doctrine, which I consider a new dangerous attempt to control and mastermind my life and our lives, in the name of controlling the climate.

As it happens, I stumbled by accident into net-zero ground zero in Britain in December 2019. 'We're all climate warriors here,' says my old friend and gives me a hot-off-the-press copy of *Absolute Zero*, a government-funded report of which her husband is co-author.

'Excellent,' says I, 'for I am an arch-sceptic', provoking her son to promise, 'I'll destroy you in five minutes'. We'll see how that turned out, but for now, look at this astounding document, this certification of insanity for political leaders, like Boris Johnson and Anthony Albanese – and perhaps, I say with a heavy heart, Scott Morrison - who bind their nation to net- zero CO2 emissions by 2050.

In the UK, net-zero by 2050 is now law. This clause in the *Climate Change Act* was inserted by the departing Theresa May and, tragically, reaffirmed by Boris. The authors of *Absolute Zero*, including professors from Oxford and Cambridge, take the rule of law seriously: 'Obeying the law of our *Climate Change Act* requires that we stop doing anything that causes emissions.' Anything means anything. On page 3, 'Key messages for individuals', two examples caught my eye: 'Stop using aeroplanes' and 'Stop eating beef and lamb'.

Is this satire? Absolutely not: ‘The actions stated as absolutes are those which will be illegal in 2050 due to the *Climate Change Act*’. The *Absolute Zero* timeline to 2050 requires that, this decade, ‘All airports except Heathrow, Glasgow and Belfast close with transfers by rail’, and from 2030 to 2049 ‘All remaining airports close’. If you want to run away to sea, best be quick: this decade, ‘Shipping must contract’ because ‘there are currently no freight ships operating without emissions’, and from 2030 to 2049, ‘All shipping declines to zero’.

Incredible. This ‘research programme sponsored by the UK Government’ was debated at length in the House of Lords on 6 February last year, and the mover, Lord Browne, confirmed the stoical implications of net-zero by 2050: ‘There will come a time when we are so far short of the target we have voluntarily and legally imposed on ourselves that the only way to achieve it will be, among other things, to give up flying and shipping.’

Just ponder the implications of that for a far-off land girt by sea. Girt by shame for the coal and gas it fills its ships with today, having ridden to prosperity yesterday on the back of a planet-destroying ruminant.

Journalist David Speers probed Albanese on these implications on ABC *Insiders* : ‘This net-zero target will apply to farming and transport?’ Albo replied, ‘Indeed’. Speers continued, ‘Does it mean we’re going to have to do less livestock farming, eat less meat and consume less dairy?’, but the Labor leader was evasive, saying, ‘These things will be worked out on the way through’.

Not good enough. Will we be required to ‘Stop eating beef and lamb’ or at least slash consumption, as the Great Reset warns? Will we need to ‘Stop using aeroplanes’ in a net-zero economy? If not, why not?

But what a pristine economy it will be! *Absolute Zero* surveys the flightless, shipless, iron-deficient landscape of 2050 and assures the small groups of peasants sitting weaving their baskets, ‘Most of what we enjoy – spending time together as families or communities, leisure, sport, creativity – can continue and grow unhindered.’ Such benevolence from our masters!

I gave my friend's Oxford-bound son the five minutes he requested to destroy my argument. 'Show me,' I said, 'anything in the climate record of the last hundred and fifty years that falls outside the range of natural variation'. He could not. Nor can anybody who looks at actual data dug up by actual scientists. Take the high-quality temperature record from the Greenland ice core for the last ten thousand years. That period, the Holocene, is the blessed warm plateau between ice ages upon which all recorded history has played out. The record shows we have been cooling steadily for eight thousand years. Within that cooling trend, each millennium shows a spike of warming during which civilisation thrives, most recently the Minoan, Roman, medieval and 20th century warm periods. The only unprecedented thing about the present warming would have been if it hadn't happened.

Likewise, our CO₂ levels are historically low. Remember that plants die if carbon dioxide drops below 150 parts per million. We came perilously close to this, at 180 ppm, during the recent ice ages. When plant life first emerged half a billion years ago, it drew atmospheric CO₂ down from over 4000 ppm to between 500 and 2000 ppm. As horticulturalists know, that is the optimal range for greenhouse growth and resilience. Today, at 400 ppm, we still fall short but a modest increase from the miserable pre-industrial level of 280 ppm has contributed to record-breaking harvests and the satellite-proven greening of the earth. There is no evidence of catastrophe from much higher CO₂ levels in the past, and there is no evidence of harm from humanity's relatively small contribution to CO₂ levels now. All we have is speculation of harm generated by computer models and nightmares of harm generated by relentless propaganda.

'But we have to trust the consensus,' says the young intellectual. I said no, we cannot trust a consensus that has been corrupted by a bigger political game; I said that he and his peers in Generation Mush have been so marinated in green-left dogma all their lives that they are now mere useful idiots for global socialism (I hardly knew this lad, so the discussion had to be polite). His response was significant: 'My generation is not sure there's that much wrong with socialism.'

And there you have the next twenty years of politics and economics unless this juggernaut is turned around.

This young man has a better chance than others in his generation. His family's Christian faith will resist the save-Gaia pantheism that agitates the young and the eco-socialism that drives the elite. But other families have little defence against today's apocalyptic pseudo-science and cult-like indoctrination. Until strong leaders confront this ruthless political movement, we have net-zero chance of defending our sovereignty against globalist servility and our children's minds from global despair.

Will we stand or fall?

And so, ladies and gentlemen, the foundations of our liberty and sovereignty are clearly being shaken, and it is unclear whether we will stand or fall. Daniel Hannan, the politician who, besides Nigel Farage, was most responsible for the Brexit victory, still holds out hope. He sums up the story of what we have looked at today, what he calls "the Anglosphere miracle":

The story of the English-speaking peoples is the story of how they imposed their will upon their rulers. We have noted the way the primitive tribal meetings of the early Teutonic peoples evolved into the local assemblies of the settlers in England, into the Witan of the Anglo-Saxons, and, after many fierce struggles, into the direct ancestor of the parliamentary bodies that meet throughout the Anglosphere today. We have observed, too, the brave role played by the common law: that beautiful, anomalous system that belongs to the people, not the state... We watched it serve as an antibody against the infections of slavery and dictatorship ... [We observe] the peculiar features of Anglosphere civilization that find their purest and freest expression in the United States ... Free speech, free contract, free assembly, ownership rights, parliamentary control of the executive... We have grasped the essence of the Anglosphere miracle ... How, having taken in this much, could we not be disquieted by the readiness with which our generation has squandered its heritage?

Let us not squander this heritage. Let us teach the next generation to see our history with more justice and compassion. Let us, by example, summon the stubborn pride and courage of our Anglo-Saxon forebears and defend the hard-won liberty and self-governing sovereignty that all of us, regardless of colour or creed, have been given as our birthright.