

Robert Kilroy-Silk writes...on Government Interference in Family Life

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Defending David Blunkett, the Prime Minister announced that “politicians are entitled to a private life, the same as everyone else”.

That’s true. That’s fair. Of course it is. But hold on a minute, “everyone else” isn’t entitled to a private life, not under Tony Blair’s government they aren’t.

This New Labour government interferes in its citizens private lives all the time. It tells them what to think, it tells them what to say, and it tells them how to behave. It instructs them on how to live, it sits in judgement on them, and is totally confident that it, and only it, knows what is best for “everyone else”. It represents the Nanny State and Big Brother rolled into one.

Tony Blair’s ministers are unapologetic about invading our private life. They do it all the time. Proper little know-it-alls they are. They’re the epitome of the dreaded do – gooder with a saintly mission to make us all into better citizens, better parents, better employers, better workers, better everything.

As the Home Secretary, dear saintly David Blunkett, is of course, the worst offender, by far. He has no doubts about his qualifications to lecture us in the privacy of our own home on how we should behave.

Whilst not wishing to sit in judgement on the Home Secretary it has to be said that this very same man who has, apparently, had two children by another man’s wife and who, allegedly, harassed a pregnant woman over the telephone, is not only the sternest critic of “anti social behaviour”, but also the man who once publicly preached on the virtues for children of a stable marriage.

It is the very same man who threatened to send parents of anti-social children to residential parenting courses for weeks with the threat of imprisonment if they refused – a measure described by the then Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, as “draconian” and “extreme”.

It is the very same Home Secretary who champions the cause of compulsory ID cards so he can invade our privacy to the extent of knowing virtually everything about us that he, eventually, determines is desirable.

Tony Blair’s other ministers are equally avid to intrude into our personal and family lives. The Minister for Children, Margaret Hodge, is determined to act as the Nanny in Chief – with or without a visa - to our homes. She intends to tell parents how to bring up their children. She will tell them when they should read to them, how to talk to them, how much TV they should be allowed to watch. There is no end to her busy-body interference. And she is adamant that the state knows best.

And so do all the others whether its Charles Clarke laying down the law on chastising children, John Reid bullying us into not smoking and not eating, and John Prescott patronising, informing us that when we vote down whatever he proposes we are simply misguided.

The double standards are amazing, aren't they? We are to have virtually every aspect of our private life peered into by the Government but the moment one of their own has a personal problem we're told to back off, mind our own business, leave him in peace, let him sort out his private problems in private.



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