

Moving in mysterious ways

By Theodore Dalrymple

A recent article in the *Birmingham Mail* carried the headline “Barclays customers warned to ‘move’ their money elsewhere”.

Normally, a warning comes with some kind of threat, personal or impersonal.

Furthermore, a threat of the nature suggested by the headline emanates from someone or some organisation. One would have thought that it was the

duty, indeed purpose, of a newspaper to reveal who had issued the warning or threat, but nothing of the kind was to be found in the article.

Instead, we read:

Barclays bank customers have been urged to ditch their accounts and shift their money elsewhere after bank branches in England and Scotland have been covered in red paint and had windows smashed as part of protests by a pro-Palestine group.

One assumes, though it is not strictly stated, that this group, Palestine Action, is doing the urging – which is not the same, incidentally, as warning. The decision to place the word “move” in the headline in inverted commas was surely peculiar and distracting, if not dishonest and pusillanimous.

The article continues:



Which? names three “eco-providers” for current accounts: the Co-operative Bank, Nationwide Building Society, and Triodos Bank.

The last-named has on its website the following declaration:

We believe that freedom is the state of being able to act, speak, or think, and develop, taking into account equality and responsibility for other people and the Earth.

No totalitarian dictator could have put it better.

As for the Co-op Bank, it “has a policy ‘our planet, our people and our communities’ and is committed to not providing banking services to businesses and organisations that conflict with its policy”. As Fidel Castro put it, “Inside the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing.”

When asked whether she was in pain, Mrs Gradgrind thought there was a pain somewhere in the room but couldn’t positively say that she had got it. I think there is a menace somewhere in the country, but I could not positively say where or what it is. Perhaps it is everywhere.

First published in [The Critic](#)