

# Repression Britannia

By Theodore Dalrymple

I used to think that the notion of a liberal fascism was absurd, a figment of a paranoid political imagination. Now I am not so sure.

More than one person has been arrested in London for holding up a poster calling Hamas a terrorist group (which happens to be the official British government position) and of causing a disturbance by becoming the object of insult and aggression, actual or potential, by pro-Palestinian demonstrators. Thus do the British police interpret freedom of speech and association.

Recently, a man was arrested and convicted of having prayed outside an abortion clinic in Bournemouth, a seaside town on the south coast. The council had forbidden any pro- or anti-abortion demonstration within 150 yards of the clinic, but Adam Smith-Connor prayed silently, apparently out of sight of the clinic, within that limit. Smith-Connor is a convert to Christianity; he was praying for what he called his son, whom he and his wife or lover had aborted more than 20 years before.



He was approached by two auxiliary policemen, both so fat that they could not have run after a burglar. He did not move on when asked to do so. A less threatening individual than Smith-Connor could hardly be imagined, but technically he had broken the law. No understanding for him, however! He was given a sentence suspended for two years and was obliged to pay about \$12,000 for the cost of the prosecution. According to the main Catholic newspaper in Britain, Bournemouth council had spent \$120,000 in bringing the case, so important did it deem it.

On the other hand, tens of thousands of people are permitted to demonstrate time and time again, to the great inconvenience of the rest of the public, in effect supporting the mass murder of 1,200 Israelis by a terrorist organization and calling for the deaths of millions of others. This has become a “liberal” cause and is therefore protected.

It was instructive to read the reviews of the abortion clinic outside which Smith-Connor prayed—a charitable institution, incidentally. Some praised the clinic highly, but at least half were damning. Here is one posted two months ago:

*I fell pregnant in 2010. I was scared and wasn't sure if I was ready to be a mum. My mum came with me and thank God she*

*did, as I changed my mind during the appointment. They were horrible to me as I had "just wasted their time." Absolutely no compassion for a young mum, my mum doesn't often get angry at people but she did that day. As she used to be a nurse and couldn't believe their attitude. They made me feel dreadful and said that if I didn't want the baby enough to make an appointment, then I shouldn't have a baby. My son is the best thing to happen to me. . . . What she said to me that day still haunt me. I fear if I had gone alone they may have bullied me into something I would have regretted for the rest of my life.*

Here is another from seven months ago:

*I can't begin to explain the very bad experience I had with [the clinic] only a week ago, the woman clearly wasn't trained she had no idea where she was scanning and she scanned me twice in 2 weeks and decided to tell me there was either no baby (which made me feel like she was accusing me of lying) or it could be ectopic. Fast forward to today after 2 weeks of stress not knowing what was going on. At Poole hospital the second the ultrasound touched my body you could see everything. I asked the nurse and she was shocked [the clinic] couldn't do their job properly. Not only am I having a completely normal pregnancy, I could have had my termination 2 weeks ago. They left me scared and suicidal for 2 weeks. Do not trust them.*

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