

Jeremy Clarkson
Sunday Times, 9th November 2009

I've given the matter a great deal of thought all week, and I'm afraid I've decided that it's no good putting Peter Mandelson in a prison. I'm afraid he will have to be tied to the front of a van and driven round the country until he isn't alive any more.

He announced last week that middle-class children will simply not be allowed into the country's top universities even if they have 4,000 A-levels, because all the places will be taken by Albanians and guillemots and whatever other stupid bandwagon the conniving idiot has leapt

I hate Peter Mandelson. I hate his fondness for extremely pale blue jeans and I hate that preposterous moustache he used to sport in the days when he didn't bother trying to cover up his left-wing fanaticism. I hate the way he quite literally lords it over us even though he's resigned in disgrace twice, and now holds an important decision-making job for which he was not elected. Mostly, though, I hate him because his one-man war on the bright and the witty and the successful means that half my friends now seem to be taking leave of their senses.

There's talk of emigration in the air. It's everywhere I go. Parties. Work. In the supermarket. My daughter is working herself half to death to get good grades at GSCE and can't see the point because she won't be going to university, because she doesn't have a beak or flippers or a qualification in washing windscreens at the lights. She wonders, often, why we don't live in America.

Then you have the chaps and chapesses who can't stand the constant raids on their wallets and their privacy. They can't understand why they are taxed at 50% on their income and then taxed again for driving into the nation's capital. They can't understand what happened to the hunt for the weapons of mass destruction. They can't understand anything. They see the Highway Wombles in those brand new 4x4s that they paid for, and they see the M4 bus lane and they see the speed cameras and the community support officers and they see the Albanians stealing their wheelbarrows and nothing can be done because it's racist.

And they see Alistair Darling handing over £4,350 of their money to not sort out the banking crisis that he doesn't understand because he's a small-town solicitor, and they see the stupid war on drugs and the war on drink and the war on smoking and the war on hunting and the war on fun and the war on scientists and the obsession with the climate and the price of train fares soaring past £1,000 and the Guardian power-brokers getting uppity about one shot baboon and not uppity at all about all the dead soldiers in Afghanistan, and how they got rid of Blair only to find the lying twerp is now going to come back even more powerful than ever, and they think, "I've had enough of this. I'm off."

It's a lovely idea, to get out of this stupid, Fairtrade, Brown-stained, Mandelson-skewed, equal-opportunities, multicultural, carbon-neutral, trendily left, regionally assembled, big-government, trilingual, mosque-drenched, all-the-pigs-are-equal, property-is-theft hellhole and set up shop somewhere else. But where?

You can't go to France because you need to complete 17 forms in triplicate every time you want to build a greenhouse, and you can't go to Switzerland because you will be reported to your neighbours by the police and subsequently shot in the head if you don't sweep your lawn properly, and you can't go to Italy because you'll soon tire of waking up in the morning to find a horse's head in your bed because you forgot to give a man called Don a bundle of used notes for "organising" a plumber.

You can't go to Australia because it's full of things that will eat you, you can't go to New Zealand because they don't accept anyone who is more than 40 and you can't go to Monte Carlo because they don't accept anyone who has less than 40 mill. And you can't go to Spain because you're not called Del and you weren't involved in the Walthamstow blag. And you can't go to Germany ... because you just can't.

The Caribbean sounds tempting, but there is no work, which means that one day, whether you like it or not, you'll end up like all the other expats, with a nose like a burst beetroot, wondering if it's okay to have a small sharpener at 10 in the morning. And, as I keep explaining to my daughter, we can't go to America because if you catch a cold over there, the health system is designed in such a way that you end up without a house. Or dead.

Canada's full of people pretending to be French, South Africa's too risky, Russia's worse and everywhere else is too full of snow, too full of flies or too full of people who want to cut your head off on the internet. So you can dream all you like about upping sticks and moving to a country that doesn't help itself to half of everything you earn and then spend the money it gets on bus lanes and advertisements about the dangers of salt. But wherever you go you'll wind up an alcoholic or dead or bored or in a cellar, in an orange jumpsuit, gently wetting yourself on the web. All of these things are worse than being persecuted for eating a sandwich at the wheel.

I see no reason to be miserable. Yes, Britain now is worse than it's been for decades, but the lunatics who've made it so ghastly are on their way out. Soon, they will be back in Hackney with their South African nuclear-free peace polenta. And instead the show will be run by a bloke whose dad has a wallpaper shop and possibly, terrifyingly, a twerp in Belgium whose fruitless game of hunt-the-WMD has netted him £15m on the lecture circuit.

So actually I do see a reason to be miserable. Which is why I think it's a good idea to tie Peter Mandelson to a van. Such an act would be cruel and barbaric and inhuman. But it would at least cheer everyone up a bit in the meantime.

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