

Keeping a handle on the hellish hand basket

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From Mr Alan Rohrbach.

Sir, Richard Lambert, your former editor, exhibits one of those traits that make the British a great people: aggressive defence of one's perspective ("Too many people are tuning out of the news", November 1). His dogged belief in the existence of an "informed citizenry" which will somehow soon be lost is refreshingly naïve. There has not been an informed citizenry since The Great Class War ended.

Since the left went pacifist in the late 1970s, and the patriotic working class performed a noble act of self-immolation by repeatedly voting for Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (who rewarded them by eviscerating their leverage over the US and UK economies), nobody cares; except insofar as issues are driven by their parochial interests. Globalisation only reinforces labour's sense that it will remain under negative compensation pressure; the underclass never did care; and Mr Lambert's assertion is accurate: what remains is devolving into partisan twaddle (with an emphasis on soundbite journalism).

The basic view is the same as that of any reasonably intelligent citizen of Rome living through the decline of the empire, and aptly summed up by Governor Anthony Cloyden Hayes (Peter O'Toole) in the wonderfully obscure little flick *Club Paradise* (amazingly enough co-starring Robin Williams and Jimmy Cliff): "Dear lady, I frankly do not care if the world is going to hell in a hand basket; as long as I am one of the people holding the handle."

That explains a lot of the excessive executive compensation packages, and financial business shenanigans as well, now, doesn't it?

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