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It Can Happen Here **by Scott McPherson**

*You think you've private lives
Think nothing of the kind
There is no true escape
I'm watching all the time*

*I'm made of metal
My circuits gleam
I am perpetual
I keep the country clean...*

— Judas Priest, “Electric Eye”

England's *Daily Express* [reported on August 4](#) that “thousands of the worst families in England are to be put in ‘sin bins’ in a bid to change their bad behavior.” Ed Balls, the Children's Secretary, has announced a 400 million pound plan to put Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in 20,000 homes in Britain, says the *Express*, “to ensure that children attend school, go to bed on time and eat proper meals.”

This “sin bin” program already operates in many parts of the country, and about 2,000 families are presently under observation by their betters in the local bureaucracy. But Balls wants the program to be universal. “There should be Family Intervention Projects in every local authority because every area has families that need support,” he says. *1984* isn't just a novel anymore; it's happening in England right now, complete with a “newspeak” vocabulary that equates totalitarian measures with “support for families.”

Should we care about domestic policy in England?

The American Revolution has been described as a “conservative” revolution, because so little changed. Unlike the French Revolution, which would usher in a reign of terror and a

dictatorship, and the Russian Revolution, which followed the same course, the American fight was largely about reaffirming principles that had evolved under the British constitution — due process, habeas corpus, government by consent, limited parliamentary power, private property and, most important, personal privacy and individual rights.

The fighting had barely begun and Americans were establishing new governments in accordance with these same principles. It was to the ideal of English governance that American statesmen would repair.

Like the West in general, Britain has been riding a wave of “progressivism” for the last century, moving away from a limited-government tradition and towards government growing larger and taking over more areas once left to individuals, communities, churches, and other means of mutual aid. Taking a moral high ground surrendered by conservatives either afraid or ill-equipped to challenge such pretensions — and often aided and abetted by them, as in this present case — leftists there have created a Nanny State that proudly boasts of “cradle to grave” protection in the form of unemployment insurance, “family allowances,” national health insurance, government housing programs — the list goes on and on — alongside massive taxes on “luxuries” like automobiles and gasoline, incredible powers vested in labor unions, draconian gun control, and extortionate income taxation — to the point that government in the UK controls about 40 percent of GNP and touches just about every area of everyone’s life.

But it isn’t enough. It’s never enough. Those who crave power over others always want more, and when their attempts to remake society fall short of the intended mark, the blame is always laid on some alleged “lack” of power and legislation.

Poverty “justified” the welfare state. Then, when the economy subsequently floundered, more welfare was “needed.” When the welfare state had [undermined individual dignity and a general sense of personal responsibility, rising crime ensued](#), and it was more police powers and surveillance of society that was demanded. And now, after Britain has reached the point where your DNA can be taken for a moving violation and there are more CCTV cameras in public places than any other country on earth, we hear, once more, that it’s not enough. Private places — people’s homes — will now feel the eyes of growing state power because little Tommy isn’t doing his homework.

The reason we should be concerned about Ed Balls’ actions “across the pond” is because they so closely mirror the actions of our own leaders, who seek more power to wage [endless wars](#), [take over industries](#), [spy on the citizenry](#), [detain people without trial](#), [run our health care system](#), [interfere in local matters](#), and [use the military against our people](#). Strong and ancient principles that limit government power can and have been eroded beyond recognition in a “liberal democracy” like Great Britain, and they can be destroyed here too. Cameras may soon be coming to a home near you. Maybe even yours.

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