

Chapter 5

The Political Drone

Parliamentary politics are heavily infected by drones. This infestation is a consequence of the victory of the political parties over Parliament. The way this victory came about stems from the fact that in most Western countries the majority of parliamentary seats are squarely in one camp or another. In the past rich and poor lived cheek by jowl, as the rich required their servants to be close at hand. Technology and transportation systems have enabled the rich to separate themselves from the untouchables. This social shift and the selective management of electoral boundaries by party strategists have resulted in a bipolar electorate, which generally supports a duopoly. These are the safe seats. In the comparatively small number of swing seats, where there is competition, parties must put forward candidates who have voter appeal. To have voter appeal, above that of candidates from contending parties, a candidate must come across as a particularly hardworking, intelligent and competent politician. In the safe seats, the drover's dog will win, if it is wearing the right colours. This means that the real contest in the majority of seats is for party preference. The criteria for party preference are unquestioning loyalty to the party and more particularly the ruling faction of the party. Provided this criterion is met, competence is irrelevant and in fact incompetence is preferred, as dunces are no threat to those who hold power. Moreover the drone is locked in and cannot stand on principle as they will just be passed over for another grinning candidate. What Andrzej Łobaczewski says in regard to psychopaths applies to drones, as follows:

A normal person deprived of privilege or high position will go about finding and performing some work which will earn him a living; but pathocrats never possessed any solid practical talent, and the time frame of their rule eliminates any residual possibilities of adapting to the demands of normal work. If the laws of normal man were to be reinstated, they and theirs could be subjected to judgment, including a moralizing interpretation of their

*psychological deviations; they would be threatened by a loss of freedom and life, not merely a loss of position and privilege. Since they are incapable of this kind of sacrifice, the survival of a system which is the best for them becomes a moral imperative.*³²

These situations provide ideal sites for drone infestation. Looked at this way, aside from a few vestigial mavericks whose popularity is needed for a swing seat, political parties are comprised of a small faction which holds power together with those who hope to succeed them, perhaps a leadership contender, a couple of minuscule splinter groups and a great majority of drones who just have to know which way the wind is blowing and how to put their hands up at the right time, and for this they are on the gravy train, usually for life. I recall one politician who was notable for having attempted to get pre-selection from a number of parties. The ideology didn't bother her, she just wanted a meal ticket. In fact some of them are so incompetent that they even have trouble with putting their hand up at the right time. When the New Zealand First party voted with the government to introduce an identity card system masquerading as a driver's licence, they all voted the wrong way by mistake. They had to recall the vote and to do it again to get it right. The New Zealand First party is a good example of another drone preferment factor in politics. Its leader, Winston Peters, is arguably the best Parliamentary street fighter in New Zealand politics. Not only this, but he was almost the sole politician who took on the high level corruption which characterises New Zealand, in the Wine Box affair. His weak point is that he must be the boss. New Zealand First, at its inception, gained a third of the popular vote from New Zealanders desperate for something other than the neo-conservative policies of Labour and National. Despite this incredible start, New Zealand First has dwindled in the polls. I think that this can be partially attributed to their lack of depth of talent, which in turn is a

³² Political Ponerology. p143.

result of Winston not wanting to be overshadowed by others, as despite all his many talents, Winston is a rather short man.

It is the drone factor that has enabled political parties to exercise top-down control because with a preponderance of drones, a tiny group can dominate the majority. Such small groups then adopt practices such as the principle of Cabinet consensus. This means that if a majority is attained in Cabinet all members are obliged to conform to the majority. The full Cabinet then comprises a significant component of the party caucus. The numbers the full Cabinet brings to bear, along with the influence the party leadership has, will more often than not dominate a drone ridden caucus and so will steer the party. During Helen Clark's regime NZ was governed by 8 people. The way in which such small factions of politicians successfully hold power without the business of state falling apart, is that they relinquish significant administrative authority to the state bureaucracies or to business. The surrender of administrative power to the state bureaucracies is best demonstrated in the TV series *Yes Minister*, which is a perfect picture of the political drone and the transfer of power to bureaucrats. It is by yielding administrative power to the bureaucrats that small factions of politicians can appear to get the job done, without having to share power with a larger group of competent parliamentarians. This enables a small group to run things from the top and is profoundly pro-drone. At one stage I was working in the area of welfare law as a lawyer for welfare beneficiaries. While I was in that field the left wing Labour Party Welfare Minister signed into effect a horribly neo-conservative measure. The excuse given by the party apologists was that as there were so few people of talent in the Government, at a ministerial level, that our man, being one of them, was completely overworked and just signed anything the evil creatures in the bureaucracy put in front of him.

The surrender of the business of the state to business is the holy of holies of neo-conservatism and an orthodoxy it is almost treason to dispute. The abrogation sovereignty this practice entails is explicitly stated in the US Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act (also called the Medicare Modernization Act or MMA). Signed of by George W. Bush in 2003, the MMA actually prohibits the American government from negotiating discounts with drug companies.

