

3-30-2001

Trends. The Psycho-politics of Foot in Mouth on Foot in Mouth: Pigs, Sheep, Cows, Politicians on the Animal Farm

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Recommended Citation

Editor (2001) "Trends. The Psycho-politics of Foot in Mouth on Foot in Mouth: Pigs, Sheep, Cows, Politicians on the Animal Farm," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 10 : Iss. 11 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol10/iss11/6>

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International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: Trends. The Psycho-politics of Foot in Mouth on Foot in Mouth: Pigs, Sheep, Cows, Politicians on the Animal Farm

Author: Editor

Volume: 10

Issue: 11

Date: 2001-03-30

Keywords: Agriculture, Foot and Mouth Disease, Labor Party, United Kingdom, Vaccinations

Conservative Party leaders in the United Kingdom assert that if the Labor Party-led government implements a vaccination policy to combat an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, then the new policy will ipso facto be proof of the failure of current policy of culling from herds. With proof of the failure of the old policy, the Labor Party is allegedly not worthy of leading the country even if it is appropriately substituting a policy that may be successful in place of a failed one. On the other hand, if the Labor Party stays with its current policy there will be no proof of a failed policy because there is no new policy to show that the old policy is a failure--except for the fact that the current policy may be a failure because the incidence and prevalence of foot and mouth disease seems to still be increasing

Some Labor Party leaders advocate that the current policy is the correct one and eventually the foot and mouth disease will peter out or continue at some very low incidence and prevalence. On the other hand, research on the natural history of the disease suggests that some "ending" of the epidemic would occur whether or not the current policy would be in place. Other Labor Party leaders advocate a change in policy because there is a demand for one from opponents or "the people" regardless of whether a change is necessary from a primary prevention perspective.

Concurrently with all the above, various scientific experts are jousting about how effective vaccination might be for preventing the disease, how well assessment procedures can differentiate animals that have been vaccinated from those who are infected with the disease, and how useful nomothetically validated procedures are for individual cases. A subtext of internecine and narcissistic conflict over reputations, prestige, and actual and perceived slights inform the texts of professional discourse.

While scientific and policy analysis may finally beget success in the battle against the foot and mouth disease of cloven-hoofed animals, the figurative disease characterizing politicians surely will prove resistant. (See Coates, R.D. (1999). Social action, radical dialectics, and popular protests: Treatment of African American leaders and intellectuals by the press. *Journal of Black Studies*, 30, 85-102; Cowell, A. (March 28, 2001). Britain reluctantly considers animal vaccination. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Malone, K.R. (2000). Subjectivity and the address to the other: A Lancaian view of some impasses in theory and psychology. *Theory & Psychology*, 10, 79-86; Miller, L.J. (2000). The poverty of truth-seeking: Postmodernism, discourse analysis, and critical feminism. *Theory & Psychology*, 10, 313-352; Norfolk, A. (March 28, 2001). Queue for slaughter grows by 70%. *The Times*, <http://www.ecola.com/go/?f=&r=eu&u=www.the-times.co.uk>.) (Keywords: Agriculture, Foot and Mouth Disease, Labor Party, United Kingdom, Vaccinations.)