

VOICE OF THE

DAILY Mirror

Home in on hypocrisy

AUSTERITY doesn't start at home when this Conservative-led Government featherbeds its own Cabinet ministers.

Foreign Secretary William Hague is a very wealthy man who could easily afford his own accommodation.

Spending £2,000 a day of our money so he enjoys a life of luxury in a palatial residence in central London is an utter disgrace.

When David Miliband was Labour's Foreign Secretary for three years, he lived in his own home. And Hague should put his hand in his pocket instead of behaving like a viceroy in a far-flung colony.

The sense of entitlement of these Tories is breathtaking. They clobber Britain's poor and hardworking families then stick their snouts deep into the public trough.

The cash lavished on Hague is the equivalent of the Bedroom Tax levied on 1,000 families. Taking from the poor to give to the rich stinks of a heartless Sheriff of Nottingham approach to politics.

Until austerity starts at home, particularly the home of the Foreign Secretary, this Tory Government will be guilty of grotesque hypocrisy.

Trolls tamed

THE jailing of the Twitter troll who gloried in the killing of teacher Ann Maguire is a warning to all the other low life who think it is big or clever to be abusive.

The sad losers are soon cut down to size in the dock and their self-pity when prison sentences are handed out underlines how most of them are social inadequates.

Hiding behind assumed names or a line of letters and numbers is no protection, as pathetic Robert Riley discovered. So if you can't do the time, don't send the stupid tweets.

Crash victims

HAVE sympathy for many of the 19,000 Barclays staff losing their jobs.

The workers you see in branches are victims, often on low pay, and never caused the financial crash.

Once again many ordinary people are paying the price for the reckless greed of fatcats.



"Would you like to come up for a quick coffee, marriage, baby, divorce, kiss & tell story..."

As religious food labelling debate heats up...

BY MELISSA THOMPSON

DO you know how the meat on your dinner plate or in your lunchtime sandwich was slaughtered? And do you care if it was shot with a bolt, gassed, electrocuted or killed according to strict Islamic halal methods?

This week the food industry has been hit by a series of revelations that leading supermarkets, restaurants and fast-food chains are serving halal meat without telling customers.

It also emerged that every piece of New Zealand lamb sold in Britain comes from halal slaughterhouses, which is rarely mentioned on the packaging.

Halal is the method of killing an animal under Islamic law – the throat is slit and the slaughterman recites a short prayer, while the animal bleeds to death. The halal meat industry is worth £2.6billion in the UK and most Muslims will eat only halal meat.

This week's row was sparked by news that Pizza Express serves only halal chicken, a fact that is not mentioned on menus though it is stated on the firm's website. Since

Should we be told if the meat we buy is halal?



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CONTROVERSY Halal lamb and, right, a pizza from Pizza Express

“This is not an attack on religious faith, it is a view we have taken on animal welfare”
 JOHN BLACKWELL
 BRITISH VET ASSOCIATION

then, more leading stores – including Waitrose, Morrisons and Marks & Spencer – have been accused of stocking halal meat without telling shoppers, along with restaurant and fast-food chains, including Domino's and KFC.

Others chains, such as Subway and Sainsbury's, sell halal meat but mention it on labels and menus.

Some critics claim halal, and the similar Jewish shechita method, cause more suffering for the animal than other methods of slaughter, such as the captive bolt – by which animals are shot in the brain with a gun – electrocution and gassing.

They insist all food should be properly marked so we know exactly what we are eating.

Research by the RSPCA shows that animals can suffer pain and distress for as long as two minutes after their throats are slit while they are conscious.

British regulations dictate all animals must be stunned before slaughter, though those killed under

religious laws are exempt. Despite this, according to the Food Standards Agency, 88% of animals killed according to halal rules in Britain were stunned beforehand.

And in New Zealand, where the majority of meat exports go to Muslim countries in the Middle East, all animals are stunned before they are killed.

Now pressure is building for a law to be passed so every animal killed for halal purposes is stunned beforehand. The British Veterinary Association

has an online petition calling for a Commons debate on the issue.

BVA president-elect John Blackwell said not stunning animals before slaughter was “inhumane” and caused “suffering at the time of death”.

He added: “We have tried to keep it out of the religious sphere. This is

not an attack on religious faith, it is a view we have taken on animal welfare.” But Muslim and Jewish groups say people should have the choice to eat animals that were not stunned before slaughter.

In a joint letter in March from the Muslim Council of Britain and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, they pointed to secret footage filmed by campaign group Animal Aid that revealed “evidence of unspeakable cruelty and illegal activity in eight of nine randomly chosen British slaughterhouses”.

Animal Aid said this was an issue whether in “conventional, organic, kosher or halal” slaughterhouses.

In a second joint letter, Dr Shuja Shafi, deputy secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, and Henry Grunwald, chairman of Shechita UK, said all meat should be labelled to indicate slaughter methods to offer consumers “genuine choice”.

They wrote: “Consumers should be informed whether an animal has been mechanically stunned prior to slaughter and whether it has endured repeat stuns if the first attempt was ineffective.”

“They should also be told the method of slaughter: captive bolt shooting, gassing, electrocution, drowning, trapping, clubbing or any of the other approved methods.”

The Christian Institute claims appropriately labelling meat is simply a “courtesy”.

Spokesman Simon Calvert said: “Businesses are respecting the freedom of conscience of Muslim consumers by providing halal meat. They should extend the same courtesy to non-Muslims so people can make an informed choice.”

But supermarkets are resisting calls for revised labelling.

Andrew Opie, of the British Retail Consortium, whose members include Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Waitrose, Lidl and Aldi, said: “All own brand meat from major UK supermarkets comes from animals that have been stunned before they are killed and all

our members have confirmed all their own brand fresh meat is from animals that have been pre-stunned before slaughter.”

“We do not see the requirement to separately label meat based on the method of slaughter.”

A Morrisons spokesman said: “We require that all our own label meat and poultry is from animals stunned prior to slaughter according to our stringent animal welfare standards.”

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	Tesco	Asda	Sainsbury's	Morrisons	Waitrose	Nando's	Pizza Express	Ask	Slug and Lettuce
Do they sell halal?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is it clearly labelled on packaging/menus?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

	Yates'	Wetherspoons	Brewer's Fayre	Beefeater	Subway	Domino's	KFC	McDonald's
Do they sell halal?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Is it clearly labelled on packaging/menus?	No	n/a	No	No	Yes	No	No	n/a