



Some things don't change...

Do you remember the Leveson enquiry into the press? It received massive coverage a few years ago, as the level of phone hacking was finally uncovered, as countless examples were found of people, celebrities and otherwise, whose lives had been ruined by press intrusion?

Do you remember the financial crisis, when a bunch of bankers who'd made millions selling financial products they didn't fully understand and which were backed by phenomenally insecure loans, brought the global financial system to its knees?

Gosh, didn't things go too far? Things really had to change, didn't they?

Except, do you know what has happened in the aftermath of both Leveson and the banking crisis? Absolutely nothing.

To take the press first, the key Leveson recommendation was that an independent body not nominated by the press be set up to monitor their behaviour, because the previous self-regulated bodies had just not worked. But the press have refused: that would be interfering with 'their freedom': this precious commodity that means British people have the right to find out about Ryan Giggs' sex life.

Leveson made one key recommendation, the setting up of this independent regulatory committee. The press refused. And do you know what's really rubbish

about it? They are getting away with it. No politician dare do anything about it, because they're scared the press will get after them. NOTHING CHANGES.

Or on finance, you'd have thought that after a banking crisis that forced the government to spend £450 billion, there might be consequences. But no. The banking industry ploughs on: city bankers continue to rake it in. Meanwhile, the UK taxpayer pays £4 billion a year on the interest on the extra loans the government took out to shore up the banks.

What has changed? Absolutely nothing. These geniuses who cook up leveraged loan reconfigurations that have nothing to do with the real world are doubtless still cooking up leveraged loan reconfigurations and when the whole thing comes crashing down, once again they will be bailed out by governments because they are 'too big to fail'.

I'm fundamentally a law-abiding person, who likes order in life, but this kind of thing is enough to turn even me into a bit of an anarchist. You think about those Occupy campaigners, and you think, they really had a point, and no one listened. Or rather, the powers listened, but they knew if they held tight for long enough, they wouldn't have to do anything about it. So they did nothing, and nobody did anything to them.

NOTHING CHANGES. And in the end, that's rubbish.

November 2016. Thought for the Train is a short column written by the Reverend Robert Stanier, the vicar of St Andrew and St Mark, Surbiton, for people to read on the train, or elsewhere. You can also read "Thought for the Train" at www.surbitonchurch.org.uk.