

The 27th John Bonython Lecture 2011

Leadership, Liberty and the Crisis of Authority

Frank Furedi



CIS Occasional Paper 125

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Frank Furedi

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Chairman's Remarks

Michael Darling

Chairman, CIS Board of Directors

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 27th John Bonython Lecture of The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS). It is my special pleasure to welcome our speaker, Frank Furedi, and his wife, Ann. I also extend our thanks to the many companies and supporters who have organised tables for themselves and their guests.

Frank is an original thinker. He has written about all sorts of things that other people don't think about—fearfulness, anxiety, paranoia, scaremongering, compulsory happiness, etc.—which are all good things for us to think about. We at the CIS have known him for some time now. Frank has been a guest speaker at a number of CIS events, particularly Consilium. And he has become known to a much wider audience in Australia with his regular column in *The Australian*. I very much look forward to his lecture tonight on 'Leadership, Liberty and the Crisis of Authority.'

The John Bonython Lecture was established in 1984. It was named after the late John Bonython of Adelaide and the first chairman of what was then the Centre's Board of Trustees. The principal purpose of the lecture is to examine the relationship between individuals and the economic, social and political elements that make a free society.

The first lecture was delivered by Professor Israel Kirzner of New York University. Over the years, the lectures have been presented by an extraordinary range of speakers across many disciplines, including Nobel laureate James M. Buchanan; Czech president Václav Klaus; Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa; chairman of News Corporation Rupert Murdoch; satirist and author P.J. O'Rourke; and economic historian Niall Ferguson.

For anyone who is not a member of the Centre or involved with its activities in some way, I urge you to consider joining it. There are very few organisations like the CIS in Australia and New Zealand, unlike, say, in the United States, where think tanks play a more prominent role in public debates and the formation of good public policy.

The CIS is probably the most recognised of the independent think tanks in Australia. In the past 12 months, for instance, its output, and the quality of it, has been remarkable. Its presence in the media has never been higher, while its membership and support growth have been vigorous and helped us through the troubled economic times of the past few years. But we believe its best years are yet to come. I urge you to join the CIS and its many dedicated people who are part of this very important Australasian institution promoting liberty and free society.

Thanks again for being here and do enjoy the evening.

Introduction

Greg Lindsay

Executive Director, The Centre for Independent Studies

The John Bonython Lecture series has been running since 1984, with the first one being held in Adelaide. Since 1984, it's also been my pleasant duty to introduce the speaker on all those occasions except one.

Introducing tonight's speaker presents me with an interesting challenge. In years past, I have talked about Nobel laureates' contributions to economics, literature and freedom; a freedom-loving politician who is now the president of his country talking about the end of socialism; or a young historian talking about the end of empires. I probably never imagined that as a classical liberal or a libertarian by physiological disposition, I would one day be introducing someone who in an earlier life was a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party and a regular contributor to a magazine called *Living Marxism*. It turns out I am doing exactly that tonight and I am very pleased that I am.

Frank Furedi was born in Hungary in 1947, and his family moved to Canada in 1956. He did his undergraduate studies there at McGill University and his postgraduate studies at London University after moving to the United Kingdom in 1969. His early academic work was devoted to the study of imperialism and race relations; in recent times, he has turned to exploring the sociology of risk, and more recently, education and the broader sweep of ideas. 'As a human and scholar committed to the promotion of an intellectually engaged public life, I have sought to reflect on the contemporary challenges facing education, culture and intellectual life,' he says on his university website.

His many books include *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?: Confronting 21st Century Philistinism*, *Politics of Fear: Beyond Left and*

Right, Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age, and *Wasted: Why Education Isn't Educating*. He writes a regular column in the *Weekend Australian* and opinion pieces for other outlets such as *The Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, the *New Scientist*, and *Spiked* (online magazine). He also comments regularly on radio and television—and has been doing so since he arrived here on Saturday.

Frank has spent most of his academic career at the University of Kent; he recently stepped back from a full-time position to concentrate on writing and public commentary. He is also a Visiting Professor at University College London. Frank is now turning his mind to the problems of authority in today's world. This is a core part of his lecture tonight, and the reason I invited him to speak.

At the height of the global financial crisis, but more generally as well, I felt people had lost confidence in the very institutions that had brought us prosperity and freedom. In fact, some senior business people I spoke to wondered whether the financial crisis had marked the end of capitalism, which really highlighted the problem of trust in something pretty fundamental. Subsequent events of course are telling quite a different story about what is failing, particularly in Europe—and who knows where this is going to end.

Frank has participated in a number of CIS activities since he first came here for our annual Consilium in Queensland several years ago, and he always makes you think about the subjects he discusses. His latest book is *On Tolerance: In Defence of Moral Independence*, and he will be addressing the vital issue of freedom of speech in a public lecture in Melbourne on Thursday evening.

It gives me great pleasure to invite Professor Frank Furedi to deliver the 2011 John Bonython Lecture.

Leadership, Liberty and the Crisis of Authority

Frank Furedi

It's a real privilege for me to be part of the cohort of individuals giving a lecture at this particular platform. It's particularly important for us to think about what's going on in the world, and the way in which ideas about leadership have become so confused and so troublesome, especially in the United States and Europe. Looking at the mess created by politicians, whether in business or the public sector, we are confronted by the central question of our time: Who is going to overcome the many obstacles and challenges we face and lead us out of this mess?

I first became interested in the question of leadership when I was asked to attend a NATO conference in Brussels a year after the 9/11 attacks. One of the aims of the conference was to figure out possible responses to devastating terrorist attacks like 9/11 on European cities. If a major terrorist attack occurred in Paris, London or Brussels, whom would you trust to go on television and tell the public what had happened? Whom would you trust to guide the people? Whom would you trust to make the hard decisions?

The Italians soon pointed out, 'Well, Berlusconi isn't going to do it. If there was a catastrophic event in Rome, you don't want Berlusconi anywhere near a television studio.' And then the Belgians got up and said, 'Look, in Belgium, we haven't got a government. We haven't got a prime minister.' They spent a long time—about a day and a half—thinking about it and decided they would probably look to their king, who, although not very charismatic, was still a symbol of unity and could be trusted to respond adequately.

When it came to us, the British, to choose whom to trust in dire circumstances, it became quickly evident that regardless of our political affiliations, Tony Blair wasn't the man for the job. By then, Blair had lost a lot of credibility and was generally regarded as a puppet of spin doctors. Although he was still a serious statesman and individual, Blair wasn't the kind of person you wanted to rely on in a wartime disaster related situation. So after prolonged discussion, and having looked at every possibility, we came up with the name of Trevor McDonald—a Caribbean newscaster who was reasonably trustworthy, mellow in speech, and reliable in being there every night—basically someone people would believe. It may sound strange but if London was quarantined and people had to follow certain instructions to leave the city, we would prefer Trevor McDonald to our elected leaders telling us what to do.

Every single delegation more or less came up with bizarre ideas and actually confirmed our suspicions that neither the experts nor the public had any real confidence in the people who had a formal claim to leadership; who were in office, and who held the official titles of prime ministers, presidents, ministers, and the rest.

Crisis of leadership

In many respects, the issue raised in 2002 hasn't really gone away. In Europe today, the problem of leadership has if anything become even more intense, even more self-evident. A couple of days ago, a friend in Milan incredulously emailed me that Mario Monti was going to become the prime minister of Italy. My first reaction was to ask who Mario Monti was—I had never heard of the guy. I soon realised that I did know of him but didn't realise it was the same Mario Monti who had never won an election in his life or even run for elected office. The only thing Monti has ever led was a seminar discussion in a university a while back. I'm sure he's a good seminar leader and a clever economist, but he's never been tested. You would think that Italy, with its heritage of leaders like Dante, Plutarch, Michelangelo and Garibaldi, would hardly settle on Monti. It kind of beggars belief of what has happened. No sooner than Monti was appointed prime minister of Italy

(by the way, before he was made prime minister, Monti was appointed as a lifelong member of the Senate by the president of Italy, which in itself is a very interesting idea—the idea that to get elected to the Senate, you don't have to run for it but can be appointed to it for life—which is a lifelong sentence for the nation) by this weird selection process that in Greece, Lucas Papademos, who is also an economist, who also has an impressive track record in running seminar discussions, but who also has never been elected, was chosen to lead Greece.

Now we've been told not to worry because the crisis of leadership in Europe has been sorted. The reality is that two economists—very nice guys and good economists but not necessarily leaders of a country—have been made prime ministers, and the fiscal problems of European society are going to get even more intense and complicated. We have avoided confronting yet again the question of leadership, of how to deal with challenging situations, how to basically tell the public that we've got some mighty big problems, how to find someone who will embrace problems and deal with them honestly and properly and lead the people out of this mess. Instead, we have appointed people behind the backs of the electorate in a way that is actually an insult to freedom and democracy.

We talk about leadership all the time, and there is a constant stream of literature on the topic. Whether you are in England, France, or America, you must be surely getting emails on a regular basis spruiking some seminar on leadership to train managers and employees to become leaders. There is a real industry that claims to turn ineffectual executives into formidable leaders and realise their potential within two or three days at a conference. And just in case the leadership training day hasn't succeeded, you can always go to the leadership section—yes, there's a leadership section now—in any good bookshop and find dozens of texts that guarantee to make you into a leader. For example, anyone interested in becoming a leader can read a book like *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow them and People Will Follow You*. I love that line—'follow them and people will follow you.' If 21 is too high a number for you, you can read *How to Deliver Outstanding Results* or *How to Lead—What You*

Actually Need to Do to Manage, Lead, and Succeed. My favourite, which I recommend to people who don't understand why we have a leadership problem, is *Primal Leadership—Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*. This book will help you 'find your real self' and be emotionally sensitive. Sadly, even if you spend hours studying it and following its instructions, I guarantee that you can turn yourself into a lot of things but not a leader. The problem with these books—and I'm not against reading them—is that they are better suited for a beach holiday because there is actually no formula in the world for becoming a leader.

The art of leadership

It is true that there are many things to learn about becoming leaders, but it is equally true that how to be a true leader cannot be taught. That's the paradox. Often the most important things in life—a good relationship, the ability to manage other people, presence in a boardroom or public life—are things we have to learn, but they are also things nobody can really teach you. We have to learn these by ourselves by talking with friends and learning from experience. There's an intuitive element to leadership that you cannot bypass; you cannot miraculously go to a training course and become a leader.

In the business world now, we have more facilitators than rats because everyone is a facilitator; we have all these mentors who are meant to take your side and turn you into a confident individual. There is no way you can become a leader by reading books or by attending training courses, or by looking to mentors and facilitators. At the end of the day, leadership is a lonely experience; there are moments when you realise you're on your own, when you've got to do something unpopular that may provoke anger and anxiety, when you've still got to do it, when you cannot outsource it to your PA or a consultant even though it would be easier on you. Some executives, when confronted by a difficult situation, make a phone call to a consultancy and bring people along to tell the workforce what they are too scared to say themselves. That does not make them leaders.

So how can we cultivate leadership, especially when there is no such thing as a perfect leader—there's always more to learn—and how

can we create a culture that takes leadership seriously and confronts complicated economic and political problems that are now part of our everyday lives?

I propose three interrelated attributes necessary for leadership, attributes that have been recognised for a very long time. Even though they are not particularly complicated, and you don't need a PhD in managerial or behavioural psychology to grasp them, they are fairly difficult to attain because the three attributes depend on our experiences rather than our act of will. The three interrelated dimensions of leadership are: the capacity to initiate; the capacity to establish a presence; and the capacity to know how to judge and make judgment calls. These are the attributes needed by political leaders, state leaders, and leaders of institutions.

Auctoritas

Ever since the beginning of time, it's been recognised that these attributes of leadership were very important. For example, the ancient Greeks had a name for government, *arche*. Although *arche* means government, its etymological meaning is actually the capacity to be the kind of person who takes the first step. It also means foundation. You can see in the discussions among Greek philosophers that what they were really getting at is that the person who initiates or starts something that wasn't there before is the one who is worthy of leading. We call it leading from the front.

What is even more interesting is that the Romans borrowed a lot of ideas from the Greeks and became even more effective global leaders for centuries. They took the Greek idea of initiating leadership and developed the concept of *auctoritas*, which can be best translated as authority but is also the root of the English word 'author.' In other words, through *auctoritas* you author, establish or initiate something. The act of authoring is almost like giving birth, but you are giving birth to an idea, a decision or a policy.

The great Latin writers always made a point when talking about *auctoritas*. For example, the great Roman emperor Augustus said it didn't count for very much that he had conquered the world, or that he was the first real emperor of Rome, or that he was the richest

person in Rome. It didn't matter much that he had the strongest military presence in the Roman Empire, or that he had many titles, or that he was called emperor, or that he was the leader of the Roman religion. What did matter was that he had *auctoritas*. What he meant was that his authority and leadership were not given to him by his office—anybody can get an official title or a nameplate saying 'Senator this' or 'Tribune that'—what he had was something that only comes from people trusting him, having the capacity to invite people's trust, and making people believe in what he said. When you look at the legacy of Augustus and what he wrote, you can really understand how the Romans grasped the essence of leadership—that real leaders are individuals who emerge by demonstrating their capacity to initiate and gain trust; they are not the ones who are made senators for life or appointed as commissioners or have a big nameplate and millions of diplomas hanging on their walls telling the world how important they are. People just know leaders because they have *auctoritas*.

An important thing about *auctoritas* is that you don't need to be a particularly and unusually charismatic person to have it. People often think only one or two people can be leaders, and everybody else needs to be followers. But one of the things that we have learned from human history is that the capacity to become leaders and initiate is not just a natural attribute that only some people have. It is something you can cultivate yourself, something that anybody who is committed to a business, or a cause, or an institution can cultivate as long as they have three important attributes: a sense of responsibility for what they are initiating; a passion for their cause, institution, business or idea; and finally, and most importantly, a commitment to see the initiative through.

Presence

The second attribute of leadership is about establishing a presence. It's not easy to describe presence, but you know when individuals have it. You go into a room and for some reason you notice someone who strikes you as being different from everybody else. These are the leaders with a presence, and the reason they have a

presence is that it is not based on people talking about themselves or showing off and saying how brilliant they are. The presence they have comes from their ability to personify what they stand for, the product they are selling, actually living the life of their business, the cause they're trying to convert people to adopt, or just resonating with individuals about a subject that touches them all. A real presence can be established even by individuals who otherwise are shy, lack charisma, or are socially awkward, but are able to do the business at the particular moment when it counts.

The most important challenge for leaders, one that all of us confront and deal with on a daily basis and cannot evade, is judgment and the capacity to make judgment calls. It goes back to an old virtue that the Greek philosopher Aristotle put forward. (I'm really sorry that I'm talking so much about the Greeks and the Romans. I never do that, but I really feel they had some very interesting ideas that provide us with a strong foundation for building a leadership culture in the twentieth century.) Aristotle said there are many important virtues like courage (obviously, you cannot be a leader without courage), honesty, morality and goodness. But the most important virtue of all, the first virtue upon which every other virtue is built, is what he called the virtue of *phronesis*.

Wisdom

Phronesis basically means practical wisdom—the capacity to make judgment calls about what needs to be done when confronted with a dilemma, making a decision, pushing something through that's important but unpopular, or deciding when to have that fight with your colleagues. All these situations call for *phronesis* or discretion—for the lack of a better word. Exercising discretion might sound like a devastatingly simplistic idea, but it is one of the most difficult things that we have to do. It's one of the most challenging of attributes we are confronted with on a regular basis because in all of our lives, in every domain, in every experience, we are encouraged not to exercise discretion.

I realised this a few years ago when I was writing a book on education and couldn't understand why children said, 'There are

really good teachers, and there are others who are really boring. They just want to be our friends and just flatter us.’ It was then that I realised the teachers they really liked were the ones who used their discretion. They weren’t just following a curriculum in an automatic, boring way but making judgment calls about what a child needed that particular day. That is what a good teacher does. A good teacher is by definition potentially a good leader.

Discretion

Now I want to talk about a word that is in many ways the real problem of leadership. The paradox we’re confronted with is that everybody swears leadership is important and necessary. There are not many people against leadership, only protestors on the streets who think anybody in a hierarchy is bad. But most human beings recognise and look to people to lead them in many aspects of their lives. But even though we all know leaders are important to deal with the challenges confronting society, we organise our lives paradoxically to make real leadership impossible. In particular, life in the Western world is organised to stigmatise and marginalise the capacity to make judgment calls. In many institutions in the West, discretion is no longer regarded as a positive attribute but something that needs to be abolished. In fact, most organisations have rule books and codes of conduct that prevent you from using discretion.

For example, if you are running a business and you notice a talented person, you might say: ‘She is exactly what I need to run a department in my company. And because she’s so good, I’m going to carve out a job for her. I’m going to get her in to sort out the problems.’ That’s how a leader thinks and works. In England, you cannot do that. You cannot say a particular woman is going to be the new manager of a department because that’s discrimination against albinos or people with hearing difficulties or some such thing. That’s seen as a form of discrimination.

Instead, you have to spend a lot of time putting together an interview panel made up of people who can barely spell the word business, never mind own one, but represent the world (the interview

panel cannot be your mates, people you trust to make the right judgment call). Even though you've already decided whom you want to employ, you have to go through the motion of interviewing every single candidate. What's even more interesting is that you could get a person you think is really good and you want to ask them questions like, 'How come I've never heard of you? Where do you come from? Who are you?' The trouble is you cannot ask such questions because that's discrimination as well. You have to ask every single candidate the same questions—whether they're short or tall, speak English or don't speak English. You never ever get a chance to make a judgment call or use discretion; you've got to work according to a formula, a script written by somebody else.

Usually there's one guy in London who writes human resources templates for every business or public sector, and you have to ask the same questions to someone working in mining and someone running a home for old-age pensioners. Of course this guy is making a lot of money with his monopoly of rule books, and you are left with your hands tied behind your back unable to use discretion to make judgment calls.

Businesses, public sector organisations, and political institutions have become discretion-free zones. You can do many things but not make judgment calls. From a bureaucratic perspective, the jargon for the proliferation of these rules is called best practice: These practices make it impossible for anybody to act as a leader, that's why they're best practice. It is best practice for the people to live by the rules and die by the rules.

Under such circumstances, we have a very big problem leading the world to confront the issues we're dealing with today. One of the things that judgment does, and what's really beautiful about the act of judgment, is that through an act of judgment, you convert the uncertainties that you face and the dilemmas you're confronted with into calculable risks. By exercising discretion, you can embrace uncertainty and turn that uncertainty into an empirically given risk that you can then calculate. By using judgment, you can control uncertainty instead of being overwhelmed by it. The more you judge, the more you use your discretion, the more you cultivate the habit of leadership, the better you become at leading and giving direction.

Being authoritative

The final point I want to make is that leadership is intimately linked to gaining authority and being authoritative. One of the problems we have in Western institutions is that authority is being increasingly seen as a bad thing. In fact, search for ‘authority’ in any search engine and you will find that the word is invariably linked to abuse of authority or described as being authoritarian. Because we are so uncomfortable with authority, we are penalising people who are trying to take initiative.

A year ago, I gave a talk on risk and authority to a group of probably two hundred of the most influential risk managers of businesses in London. I was there to give the other point of view: Why you should take risks. I was quiet during most of the discussion because these people were, in my simplistic imagination, the enemy. But then this director of a big utility company got up and said something I had heard so many times before. She said they took risk very seriously in her organisation. By that she meant they had lengthy risk-assessment documents, probably written by the same person who writes the how-to books on leadership. She then said it wasn’t two or three people managing risk but that every employee in the organisation was a risk manager.

At that point, I had a kind of religious revelation, like when a bulb lights up. My question was, if everybody in an organisation is a risk manager, who is taking risks? And if everyone is managing risks and reading documents, who is doing the actual work? The minute you question this kind of approach, you realise all these documents and talk are designed to prevent people from initiating something.

A related matter I am very much concerned about is tax regulation and our reactions to it. We are ignorant that every bit of interaction in every single department at the micro level in institutions is regulated with codes of practice, ethics committees, risk-assessment documents, health and safety rules—all of which basically tell us how to behave and react in every conceivable circumstance. Decisions are determined by processes rather than

leaders about an organisation's needs, which inevitably leads to some very big problems in the long run.

Embracing uncertainty

I want to end by making a very simple point, something we all need to take seriously. Leadership isn't about shouting or having nameplates, it isn't about being special or charismatic. Leadership is about being committed to taking risks; using discretion; and gaining authority—not by managing uncertainty out of existence but by embracing uncertainty in front of colleagues. Embracing uncertainty has the capacity to turn a potential problem into an opportunity. Uncertainty doesn't need to be equated with danger, and it is not always negative. If we intelligently embrace uncertainty, what looks like a challenge can turn into an opportunity for making things happen.

We can use the uncertainty confronting the European continent to solve the mistakes of the past and transform them into an opportunity. There is no guarantee of success, but even if you haven't succeeded in dealing with uncertainty, you would still have created the foundation for ongoing leadership into the future.

A risk-taking culture engenders a culture that is the very opposite of a process-driven precautionary culture. Process and precaution, which are the two hallmarks of the managerial approach, are the opposite of risk taking and leadership. What's at stake here isn't whether you or I become leaders; it isn't about the individual. Instead, it's about a much more fundamental question—a culture that affects us in every aspect of our life. The uncertainties we fear, the processes we live by, and the managements we create insulate ourselves from uncertainty. Ultimately, liberty itself becomes far far too much of a risk.

Can you think of anything more uncertain than exercising your freedom? One of the things about freedom is you don't know what's going to happen tomorrow or the day after. Being genuinely free means there are no guarantees, and that's what's nice about it. Freedom helps you make things happen. Freedom provides us with

opportunities that we only discover in the course of engaging in it. So in a sense, embracing risk is really about affirming freedom and liberty. Ultimately, by managing risk out of existence, we are downgrading the status of freedom. This is why we don't notice it when freedom is attacked within institutions through the institutionalisation of processes, and when we are told whom to hire and in what circumstance.

Leadership and freedom

So when we are told that it's only a small thing, it seems like it is only a small infringement on our independence and freedom. But the minute we begin to give way on the small freedoms, the minute we give up on our right to lead an organisation, the minute we stop using our initiative, we are giving a green light to a culture that regards liberty as something of an indulgence, something that is inconvenient, something we can really do without. They may say this in the language of managerial talk but what they are really saying is that freedom is negotiable, which is why I think all of us in this room have to do our best to take leadership more seriously, use our discretion and flaunt it in the face of those people who want to deny us that right, and object to even the smallest of our freedoms being taken away from us because even the smallest freedom is still very special. Thank you.

Vote of Thanks

Belinda Hutchinson

Deputy Chairman, CIS Board of Directors

It's my great pleasure to propose the vote of thanks to Professor Frank Furedi for his provocative and controversial speech. We can always expect that from you, Frank. I have attended Consilium with you on a number of occasions, and you certainly have lived up to your reputation yet again.

The Bonython lectures, as Michael has mentioned, have been running for 27 years now, and they are about the CIS providing public debate on key issues. Leadership is obviously a key issue at the moment ... as we've seen with the European debt crisis and the questions raised tonight.

One of the things that has been a real pleasure about Frank's speech tonight was that he brought some humour to what is quite a depressing subject. In terms of the current environment, we're very grateful for that. I also think that Frank provided a unique ability to simplify the issues around leadership. His view of leadership—that it is about initiating, having presence, and being able to judge—is spot on, as is his definition about taking risk and using discretion.

I think many of us can also relate to Frank's ideas about a discretion-free zone. A number of us have been on public panels where we've been given a list of questions, which are the only ones we're allowed to ask; the interview processes are such that they make it very difficult to apply judgment. As Frank said, the process has become very institutionalised, and the level of documentation involved in business today is truly frightening. At QBE, we've been evaluating the costs involved in regulation and compliance, and we have arrived at a figure of about \$100 million and counting each year—we really do need to focus on these issues.

Frank's new book, *On Tolerance: A Defence of Moral Independence*, is on sale in the foyer, and Frank's agreed to sign copies to anyone who purchases them. Professor Alan Wolfe of Boston College is quoted on the jacket: 'Being tolerant of ideas we hate is hard work but offers numerable benefits to ourselves and society. Frank Furedi's powerful critique of what passes for tolerance today reminds us of this essential truth.'

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for attending tonight's lecture. The Centre for Independent Studies is Australia's leading independent public policy think tank, but we are that only because of you and the support you give us. The individuals and the companies who support us are very important and we really want to thank you for your support. And please join me in warmly thanking Frank for a really impressive speech tonight.

Thank you.



The Centre for Independent Studies is a non-profit, public policy research institute. Its major concern is with the principles and conditions underlying a free and open society. The Centre's activities cover a wide variety of areas dealing broadly with social, economic and foreign policy.

The Centre meets the need for informed debate on issues of importance to a free and democratic society in which individuals and business flourish, unhindered by government intervention. In encouraging competition in ideas, The Centre for Independent Studies carries out an activities programme which includes:

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Leadership, Liberty and the Crisis of Authority

Western societies have become obsessed with rule making. Instead of cultivating authoritative leadership, we rely one-sidedly on rules explicitly designed to penalise the taking of initiative.

The plethora of seminars, training courses, and self-help texts promising to turn uninspiring executives into dynamic leaders miss the point that leadership is not a skill that can be learned from clever teachers.

In the 27th John Bonython Lecture, Frank Furedi discussed the distinct lack of leadership needed to deal with the many crises facing the world in the 21st century and replace the society's addiction to regulating economic and public affairs with a culture of encouraging people to take up the responsibilities associated with leadership.

Authoritative leadership is more about establishing a real presence by giving meaning to society's aspirations than just charismatic communication. One of the paradoxes of our times is that although we continually demand effective leadership, we have also created powerful institutional barriers to the exercise of discretion and judgment.

To confront the current crisis of leadership and process-driven culture, we need to foster an environment that is hospitable to risk-taking and the freedom to experiment and explore.

Professor Frank Furedi is a respected sociologist formerly with the University of Kent in Canterbury, England, and a well-known media commentator. He writes regularly for publications such as *The Australian* and *The Guardian*, and is the author of numerous books including *Culture of Fear*, *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?*, *Paranoid Parenting*, *Therapy Culture*, and *On Tolerance: In Defence of Moral Independence*.

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