

## **SADO-MASOCHISTIC GOVERNMENT**

**The masculine form of dominatrix is 'Cummings' apparently.**

He is right that the civil service needs fewer arts generalists and that they should stay in post for longer. Ironically, however, Cummings helped to make this worse when he worked for Gove in education and knowledgeable experts with considerable experience working for semi-independent agencies were transformed into civil servants. Someone I know who was head-hunted to work for Gove made the mistake of using the word 'evidence' at the preliminary interview. It was not, he was told, a word that Gove wished to hear. All Gove wished for was someone to do what Gove wanted.

Cummings believes that this is how to do government. When a minister has an idea it must be delivered. Remember that Blair had a 'Delivery Unit'? Michael Barber was in charge and wrote a book called 'Instruction to Deliver'. He relished being called 'Mr. Deliverology'. Civil servants would, I believe, refer to a presentation by Barber as 'death by flow chart and power point.'

It is all very well saying that ideas (targets in Blair's day) must be delivered but who is to say if those ideas are worthwhile? Blair had lots of consultation events but attending them you were not allowed to question the wisdom of the target. You were only there to work out how to hit your given target. Ask a question about the target and you would be told that it was a 'government given'. Yes, seriously.

As Leader of the House Rees-Mogg has knocked a month off the parliamentary working year, despite the huge legislative task facing MPs. This can only mean less scrutiny. We have already seen bills being reduced to essentials so that human rights such as the joining up of refugee families is reduced to something that might happen if at some point a secretary of state can be bothered to give it attention.

For a government run by Cummings not only is the civil service a hindrance but so also is parliament itself.

The masculine form of 'dominatrix'? Why, it is 'Dominic' of course.