

# PROBLEMS

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### The End of the Road for New Right Ideas

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## Trump and the Fading White USA

The last US government shutdown ended the political career of libertarian Newt Gingrich. He was Speaker of the United States House of Representatives from 1995 to 1999, when a variety of somehow-revealed scandals discredited him.

His Republican colleagues must have been appalled when they realised that he was neither a liar nor a hypocrite.

Even for US Republicans, honesty acceptable under some circumstances. But not a sincere believer in a line of patter that was only ever intended to lure White Racists. Used to divert vast sums of tax money to the rich, and help them legally avoid most taxes.

Most voters and political leaders assumed that Newt Gingrich's anti-state talk was a cover for shifting state spending away from people they disapproved of. Not that he really thought 1920s capitalism could be revived.

Libertarian was a good excuse. It has never been

trusted as a political truth by those with the real power.

Rural voters get enormous state subsidies to keep them in being. They do also work hard, so you can flimflam by pretending that the unemployed are cheating rather than genuinely not able to get work of any sort. Pretend that people on welfare are quite different from hard-working farm folk. But what would really terrify the USA's farmers would not be '*I'm from the government, , and I'm here to help you*', as Ronald Reagan famously claimed. It would be '*I'm from the government, and I'm here to tell you that farm subsidies have just been abolished*'. Which would have been the libertarian view, of course.

Newt Gingrich was an authentic libertarian. He would indeed have pulled the government out of the economy, given the chance. Let pure market forces decide, as they did in post-Soviet Russia. But while Western politicians were happy to see Russia experimented upon, and very surprised when Russia bounced back with anti-Western politics under Putin, they were not going to risk it at home. They knew that

unless voters could expect state aid for the ‘deserving’, for white and rural people, the US Republican vote would slump disastrously.

Donald Trump is something else. My belief has always been that he shares the politics of his father Frederick Christ Trump, better known as Fred. He was a noted businessman and racist who got denounced in a special song by left-wing folk-singer Woodie Guthrie.<sup>1</sup> And Fred had supported the Klu Kluk Klan back in the 1920s:

“On Memorial Day in 1927, the Ku Klux Klan marched in Queens to protest Protestant American citizens being ‘assaulted by Roman Catholic police of New York City.’ Fred Trump was arrested ‘on a charge of refusing to disperse from a parade when ordered to do so,’ and the only one of seven men dismissed without charges.”<sup>2</sup>

New York police and courts are famously corrupt, whatever their nominal faith. I suspect that the already-prosperous Trump Senior bought his way out of trouble. Left the Klan when the stupid brutality of its leaders was shown up: one of them raped and beat a German-American woman, causing her death. Also abandoning her while still alive and able to report her fate to the police:<sup>3</sup> they were not even clever crooks.

With the Klan marginalised, polite racism was anyway maintained for the whole New Deal period by Southern Democrats whom Franklin Roosevelt depended on. He had little choice if he were to actually cure the Great Depression: the Republicans were mostly socially liberal but pro-business. At the time, they hung onto the delusion that wealth depended on keeping taxes low and the state small. They were suspicious but resigned to a changed world in the 1950s.

There was a grand re-alignment when the need to keep Black Africa friendly during the Cold War finally pushed the US Establishment into moving seriously against White Racism. Richard Nixon had no strong belief in anything except the rights of the rich to grab more. He was well aware that there was very little truth in stories about Red China winning only because liberals neglected to help pro-American forces: he himself had cooked up some of the lies in what is misleadingly called the McCarthy era. Like Robert Kennedy, he was smart enough to dodge the blame and let the dislikeable Joe McCarthy get most of the odium. And when President, Nixon was flexible enough to see the usefulness of doing a deal with Mao in the early 1970s. Finally accepted that Beijing was the real Chinese government, which the USA had denied until then and had kept them out of the United Nations. He

made a key shift that helped the USA win the Cold War, in part because he knew perfectly well that US rhetoric about ‘Red China’ had never been particularly true.

When the US Democrats finally got serious about anti-racism, Nixon devised a ‘Southern Strategy’ to capture White Racist votes without being overtly racist.<sup>4</sup> This allowed US Republicans to win elections with economic policies that only helped the rich. Which ended the doubt and disorder of the 1970s, but produced a revised system that never did recover the very fast growth that the West had enjoyed in the 1950s and 1960s.

Capturing White Racist votes without being overtly racist meant a lot of talk about Individual Rights, which was already a long-running theme in US politics. The fantasy of Rugged Individualism was fed, and ordinary US citizens persuaded to abandon the highly successful tax-and-spend policies that had begun with the 1930s New Deal policies which given them the best period of fast growth and full employment they ever had.<sup>5</sup>

Anti-tax rhetoric was never actually believed. Military research and military spending were engines of the economy. And farm subsidies were never going to be touched.

“Republicans drew working-class voters to their platform against taxes and spending not with economic arguments, but by appealing to their conservative cultural preferences — against gay rights, abortion rights, affirmative action and gun control.

“The contradiction has only become more pronounced over time. As Americans have grown more reliant on federal programs over the last 50 years, they have increasingly embraced the Republican Party, a trend put in stark relief by President Trump’s 2016 victory. Of the 10 states in which government transfers account for the largest share of income, seven voted for Mr. Trump. Speaking to the economic and social anxieties of blue-collar white voters over immigration, trade and demographic change, Mr. Trump has championed tax cuts for the well-to-do paired with benefit cuts for the struggling voters in his base.”<sup>6</sup>

Yet fear of state power remains strong. Even for those rebelling against New Right values, it is still ‘*Poor Little American Individualists and the Terrible State-Monster*’.

“Americans for decades have shown a broad tendency

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern\\_strategy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_strategy)

<sup>5</sup> See *Feed-the-Rich Economics*, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/the-mixed-economy-won-the-cold-war/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/21/business/economy/harlan-county-republican-welfare.html>

<sup>1</sup> <https://steemit.com/life/@alexandercole/the-trump-legacy-fred-trump-woodie-guthrie-and-the-kkk-oped>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred\\_Trump#1927\\_arrest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Trump#1927_arrest)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madge\\_Oberholtzer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madge_Oberholtzer)

to say the government is doing too much that should be left to individuals and businesses, as opposed to the belief that the government should do more to help solve the nation's problems. The only times over the past quarter-century when Americans didn't side with the view that government should do less were in the early 1990s after the 1990-1991 recession and in October 2001 just after 9/11. Currently, 50% of Americans say the government is doing too much and 44% say the government should do more, with 7% undecided." (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/244115/americans-tilt-toward-favoring-less-active-gov-role.aspx>)

This foolishness has been used to maintain an enormously expensive system of private Medical Insurance. It wastes money on doubtful or unnecessary treatments for those who can pay, and denies help to many of the needy. It helped spread addiction to opioids among the white majority by prescribing legal but dangerous drugs for every little problem, in a way that would never happen in most other countries.

Fear was also used to keep up gigantic spending for the Military-Industrial Complex, which from the 1940s has been a major source of US prosperity. Consumer electronics, cheap passenger aircraft and the internet are just some of the things that have come out of it. There was a danger that it

might get cut back when the Cold War ended. A rational answer would have been an enormous boost to Space Exploration, which had taken more than 4% of the Federal Budget at the height of the Moon Race. It has since been less than 1% and has now declined to 0.5%, meaning that many interesting space projects cannot get funding. It could take over as the focus for basic research and new technology, while also finding many interesting new truths.

Rationality is the last thing that the more-than-millionaire elite dominating the USA would want to establish in politics. Rationality would question why they needed much higher incomes than they got in the 1960s, even though rates of growth are worse than they were in the 1960s. Instead, a series of phoney crises were generated, beginning with the war against Saddam's Iraq. Talk of a 'crusade for democracy' managed to win over much of the liberal-left, despite the massive failure of such policies.

But failures accumulate. Donald Trump has probably figured out that the version of the USA that he and his father wanted is collapsing. But he also intended to make a fight of it. Maybe thinks it is better to go down fighting, than quietly allow the vanishing of everything that the White Racists cherish

## Fear of Immigrants: Need for Immigrants.

Without immigration, the USA would have lost its status as the world's largest economy several years back. And with a weaker and less impressive USA, the Soviet Union might not have collapsed.

The post-war USA saw a big increase in its population. Much more than Western Europe, which itself has been boosted by much more modest immigration.

The USA looks impressive if you just look at its wealth. Particularly since the 1980s, when the New Right successfully blighted rival Western economies in the name of Free Trade:

Total GDP									
	China	India	USA	France	UK	Italy	Japan	Ireland	Soviet Union
1956	384,842	280,978	1,843,455	287,969	405,825	237,699	267,567	11,283	710,065
1966	553,676	377,297	3,151,817	479,631	540,163	415,639	649,189	14,652	1,119,932
1976	793,092	551,402	4,280,195	729,326	680,933	635,737	1,315,966	23,571	1,634,589
1986	1,703,671	848,990	5,110,480	898,129	837,280	822,404	1,904,918	32,802	1,940,363
1996	3,433,255	1,537,439	7,745,855	1,091,028	1,048,748	996,850	2,574,912	56,207	1,125,992

The same applied for the growth of its wealth

Total GDP Gain Per Decade									
	China	India	USA	France	UK	Italy	Japan	Ireland	Soviet Union
To 1966	43.9	34.3	71.0	66.6	33.1	74.9	142.6	29.9	57.7
To 1976	43.2	46.1	35.8	52.1	26.1	53.0	102.7	60.9	46.0
To 1986	114.8	54.0	19.4	23.1	23.0	29.4	44.8	39.2	18.7
To 1996	101.5	81.1	51.6	21.5	25.3	21.2	35.2	71.4	-42.0

Shown as percentage growth, the USA's advance does not look so remarkable.<sup>7</sup> Nor was it much superior to Mao's China, while the UK was inferior back then. And in fact remained inferior after its supposed rescue and renewal by Mrs Thatcher.

For the USA, economic success has gone along with a vast increase in population. This rose from just under 169 million in 1956 to nearly 270 million in 1996, a 43% increase. By contrast Britain went from just over 51 million to nearly 59 million, a mere 13% gain.

By 2010, the US population was nearly 309 million. And if you allow for this and measure GDP and GDP gain by head of population, the USA looks much less impressive:

### GDP per head

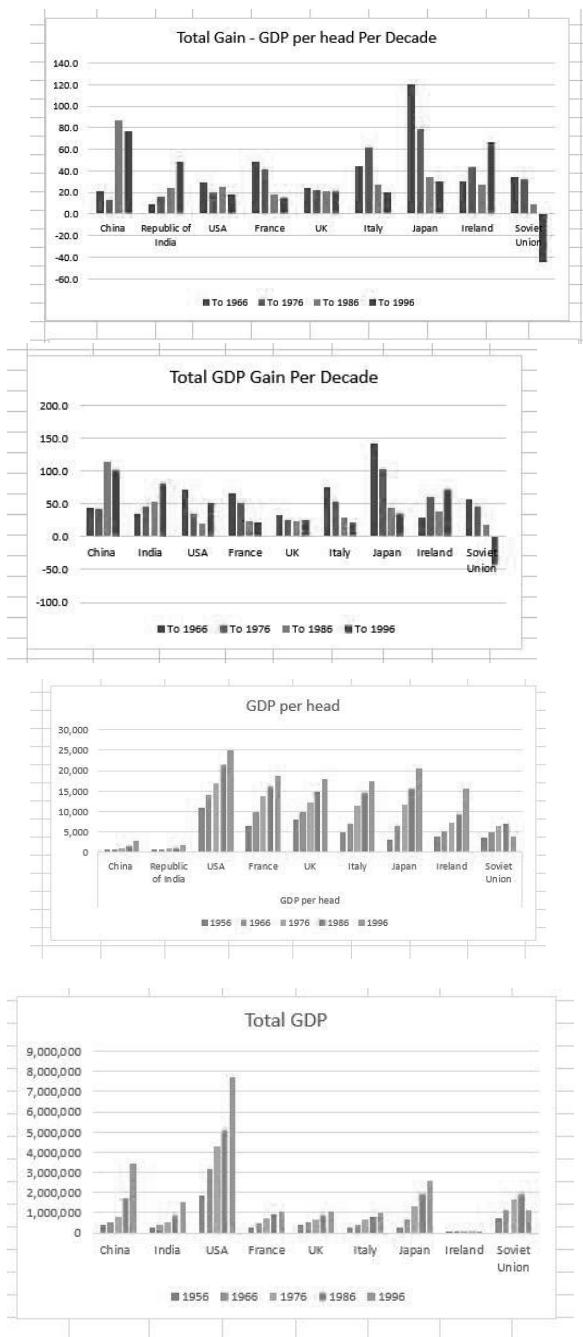
<sup>7</sup> All figures from *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* by Angus Maddison. He is generally accepted as the best source. But his data stops before 2006, and I've not been able to find a more recent equivalent.

	China	India	USA	France	UK	Italy	Japan	Ireland	Soviet Union
1956	619	701	10,914	6,568	7,929	4,859	2,948	3,897	3,566
1966	753	762	14,134	9,750	9,885	7,042	6,506	5,080	4,804
1976	852	889	16,975	13,773	12,115	11,385	11,669	7,302	6,363
1986	1,597	1,101	21,236	16,215	14,742	14,496	15,679	9,265	6,914
1996	2,820	1,630	25,066	18,686	17,891	17,377	20,494	15,472	3,854

#### Total Gain – GDP per head

	China	India	USA	France	UK	Italy	Japan	Ireland	Soviet Union
To 1966	21.6	8.7	29.5	48.4	24.7	44.9	120.7	30.4	34.7
To 1976	13.1	16.7	20.1	41.3	22.6	61.7	79.4	43.7	32.5
To 1986	87.4	23.8	25.1	17.7	21.7	27.3	34.4	26.9	8.7
To 1996	76.6	48.0	18.0	15.2	21.4	19.9	30.7	67.0	-44.3

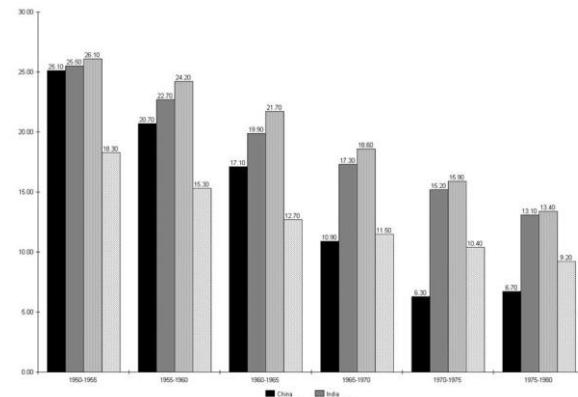
Here is the same data as graphs:



This data should also dispose of the much-repeated story that China was failing during Mao's rule and was only rescued by Deng opting for capitalism in the late 1970s.

China's population had grown rather faster than the USA: from 544 million in 1949 to 621 million in 1956 and 930 million in 1976, a gain of 41%. Deng inherited a workforce of hundreds of millions of fairly young workers who had been given a modern attitude to the world and took naturally to factory working. He was also given fairly free access to global markets without the usual anti-state rules that were applied elsewhere, precisely because the USA wanted to lure China away from Mao's highly successful system of total collective ownership.

China's population growth was also based almost entirely on a healthier and longer-lived population having more babies. Absurd claims of Mao causing tens of



millions of deaths are based on a spoof: comparing death-rates in three years of crisis with the much lower death-rates that Mao's policies had achieved for the other 23 calendar years he ruled. In terms of life expectancy, even the three bad years would have been average years for deaths for almost any other poor country at the time. And no one starved: government rations were enough to live on, if less than most people wanted.

It was otherwise in the USA. The non-Hispanic White population – those whom Trump probably views as the only *real* US citizens – grew from 132 million in 1950 to 197 million in 2010. That's a 49% gain, but the total US population went from 150 million to 308 million. It more than doubled, while Non-Hispanic Whites have fallen from 87.5% to 63.7%. The USA's traditional core also have fewer children. They are expected to become an actual minority in the next few decades.

Does it matter? For US Democrats, no. For US Republicans, it is increasingly intolerable to their key voters. Probably also to most of their elected representatives.

Iowa congressman Steve King was slapped down when he said, "We can't restore our civilization with somebody else's babies".<sup>8</sup> Civilization is still seen as based on biology, as it was for 19<sup>th</sup> century White Racists, who openly stated that their values could never be acquired by people of other racial origins. Where people defined as Mixed Race were defined as unhappy hybrids who would never be at home anywhere.

People of any origin are not at home anywhere, if they are denied a home and denied acceptance by those they try to live among. But once the society became more open, there were really no problems.

Or no problems apart from lingering racism.

US racism is like an iceberg: 90% of it is out of sight. And some of the US Republicans genuinely care for nothing except the colour of your money. But they face a delicate balancing act, keeping the different voting-blocks together.

US prosperity depends on letting in cheap labour from Latin America. And on skilled highly qualified labour from the entire world, including Latin America. That, probably, is why Trump is making such a big thing about his Border Wall. It will solve nothing, but might get him re-elected in 2020.

## A renewed New Deal? A Green New Deal?

Much remains hopeful in the USA. The Democratic Party has won control of Congress, and now has a growing socialist wing.

Holding out against Trump's demand for billions for a border wall with Mexico is entirely correct. Drugs and crime are cited by Trump, but all of the 911 terrorists had entered legally. Both drug smuggling and the entry of potential terrorists has almost always been through legal paths. It is only the poor and largely harmless who use illegal routes.

Demonising the poor has been the Republican trick. Democrats are right to oppose it. No one calls for uncontrolled immigration, but the controls as they existed before Trump were enough. There was no prospect of tens of millions of people flooding into the USA, as they probably would if all limits were removed.

Trump would not be in power had the USA not insisted on hanging onto irrational politics that makes a big fuss of accidents accumulated from its 1789 Constitution. He got less votes than Hillary Clinton, but the US elects Presidents using an obsolete Electoral College that gives an advantage to small states that mostly vote Republican.

Within the States of the Union, gerrymandering is as old as politics.<sup>9</sup> The word entered the language after a blatant fiddle by a Governor from the Democratic-Republican Party: the party that displaced the Federalists who had dominated the first critical decades of the new USA.

Federalists made the USA, preventing the fragmentation that happened with the Spanish colonies of Latin America. George Washington, nominally an independent, had a Federalist vice-president who was also his immediate

successor. Most of the Founding Fathers fitted there, with Jefferson the grand exception.

Jefferson and his Democratic-Republicans democratised the new USA, at a time when its foundations were fairly solid. Or democratised it for White Males, at least. The Democratic-Republican Party then splintered, with supporters of Andrew Jackson becoming the Democratic Party. Rival factions, including one called Republicans, formed the Whigs. For a time, they operated a stable two-party system. But the Whigs disintegrated during the crisis over slavery, and were mostly absorbed into the new Republican Party.

Just now, the fading Republican party is the main gainer from gerrymandering. They were also lucky with the seats up for contention. The Democrats got a clear majority of votes for both the Senate and the House of Representatives.<sup>10</sup> But the Senate re-elects one-third of its members every two years, with Senators having a six-year term. By contrast the House of Representatives is wholly re-elected every two years.

It is a silly system and a single cycle for President, Senate and House with universal 4-year terms would make more sense. But US citizens are very much attached to their accumulated oddities.

Within this odd system, Democrats gained 41 seats in a House with 435 members. More than 60 million votes, as against 51 million for Republicans.

Democrats failed to take the Senate, and in fact had a net loss of two seats. But it so happened that the particular one-third of the Senate seats at risk made things hard for them:

"Democrats faced what was considered an extremely unfavorable map, as they were defending ten seats in states won by Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election (and 26 in total), while Republicans were only defending one seat in a state won by Hillary Clinton in 2016 (and nine in total)."<sup>11</sup>

They got 53 million votes in the various Senate elections, as against 35 million for the Republicans. But all states have two Senators, and most of the small states are Republican.

Trump has also fought and won a battle for the soul of the US Republicans. The party is now linked solidly to the fading authority of rich white males:

"The 2018 midterm elections helped Democrats elect a diverse class of incoming members but the losses suffered by Republicans made their House caucus even more white and male.

"The proportion of white men within the Democratic caucus is set to drop from 41% to 38% next year, while the same percentage is set to rise among Republicans from 86% to 90%."<sup>12</sup>

They need racist votes, but do not meet serious racist demands – they divert them with stunts like Trump's near-

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve\\_King#Support\\_for\\_far-right\\_politics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_King#Support_for_far-right_politics)

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrymandering\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrymandering_in_the_United_States#History)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/13/us/politics/midterm-results-democratic-gains.html>

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Senate\\_elections,\\_2018](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate_elections,_2018)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/nov/14/congress-diversity-democrats-republicans-photo>

irrelevant Border Wall. Money talks loudest. US prosperity depends on non-white immigrants, as I detailed earlier.

But gerrymandering applies at all levels. Whereas Britain normally defines cities in line with reality on the ground, the USA allows all sorts of oddities:

“Why American cities are so weirdly shaped...

“Los Angeles is a striking example. The county is home to 88 incorporated cities, ranging in population from 76 (Vernon) to 3.9m (Los Angeles itself). Beverly Hills (population 34,506) is its own city, with its own police force, fire department and school district. So is Santa Monica (92,495). Even Vernon has a police department, with some 50-odd staff. All told, the county has about 30 fire departments, more than 40 police departments and 80 school districts...

“Cities that are unable easily to expand their boundaries are poorer, more segregated, have higher concentrations of poverty, lower growth, worse municipal bond ratings and less well-educated workforces...

“Residents of unincorporated areas resist annexation, fearing a greater tax burden. Those in already rich suburbs fret about sharing their taxes with the poorer core city and merging of school districts.”<sup>13</sup>

Liberals talk as if current politics are a perversion of earlier beautiful and honest politics. Actually it is the Republicans who defend the norms of the 1950s and 1960s, while the Democrats have subverted them. Democrats too used to be solidly a party of rich white males, in line with a long past:

“Just a reminder: the system in what is currently known as the US isn’t ‘broken.’ It was designed by male white supremacist slaveowners on stolen Indigenous land to protect their interests. It’s working as it was designed.”<sup>14</sup>

That’s only half true. Yes, it was *designed* for that. Yes, that is the main theme. But the New Right promised a prosperous US with a return to capitalism as it was before the New Deal. This was never a serious option. The USA’s growth before the Wall Street Crash was one of the best in the world, but it was also slow by modern standards.

And the West has not really recovered from the Crisis of 2008. So things may change as suddenly as they did in the 1930s with the original New Deal. The mainstream press are finally reporting how badly the system had got twisted:

“President Obama and his Attorney General Eric Holder Jr. made a terrible mistake by letting the miscreant bankers off the hook rather than saying, as F.D.R. did, ‘I welcome their hatred.’

“Some saw it as the end of the Democratic Party. Democrats were the party of workers, charged with protecting people from big money, big banks

and big fraud. Obama, the great hope to revitalize the left, immediately folded...

“Donald Trump scooped up ‘the forgotten,’ promising to punish Wall Street for ‘getting away with murder,’ and pledging to break up the big banks and force bankers to pay higher taxes.

“But it was just another Trump con. His administration, The Times reported, ‘has presided over a sharp decline in financial penalties against banks and big companies accused of malfeasance,’ sparing corporate wrongdoers billions in fines.”<sup>15</sup>

“In one industry after another, big companies have become more dominant over the past 15 years, new data show...

“For a long time, though, it’s been hard to figure out precisely how much consolidation. The available statistics just aren’t very good, which isn’t an accident. In 1981 — around the time that the Reagan administration was launching the modern pro-monopoly era — the Federal Trade Commission suspended a program that collected data on industry concentration.

“Fortunately, researchers in the private sector have recently begun filling in the gaps. On Monday, the Open Markets Institute — an anti-monopoly think tank — is releasing the first part of a data set showing the market share that the largest companies have in each industry.”<sup>16</sup>

Obama did not dare challenge this economic injustice. But that has changed:

“Top House Democrats join Elizabeth Warren’s push to fundamentally change American capitalism...

“The core idea of the Accountable Capitalism Act is to alter that balance of interests in corporate decision-making... “Elevating the voices of workers in our corporate boardrooms will help restore balance in our economy.”...

“The proposal would have drastic consequences, redistributing trillions of dollars from rich executives and shareholders to the middle class — but without involving a penny in taxes.

“The plan starts from the premise that corporations that claim the legal rights of personhood should be legally required to accept the moral obligations of personhood.”<sup>17</sup>

This new approach would help avoid the US public’s irrational fear of taxes.

Workers control – legal authority for the workforce – is what *should* have happened in the 1970s. Sadly, most of the Left opposed it. They thought that if they prevented a modest reform of the system, it would collapse and allow the creation of a Socialist Utopia. That the crisis would help the rise of a Populist Right was overlooked, even

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2018/12/22/why-american-cities-are-so-weirdly-shaped>

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Adrienne Keene, <https://twitter.com/NativeApprops/status/1048655971629891585>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/17/opinion/sunday/trump-bankers-fraud.html>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/25/opinion/monopolies-in-the-us.html>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2018/12/14/18136142/pocan-lujan-warren-accountable-capitalism-act>

though exactly that had happened in the 1930s.

Thanks to the left's errors, we have had nearly four decades of growing economic inequality. But the New Right have also finished off most of what was left of traditional morality in the West. And undermined the West's prestige in the wider world, which has led to many negatives, but also the strong positive of a great diversity of peoples seeing value in their own culture.

Capitalist globalisation has failed culturally. A revived socialism is the only force likely to bridge the gap between diverging human groups.

And there's another element that should regenerate the left. Climate Change, which has increasingly becoming a left-right issue.

Climate Change is correctly suspected of having caused a vast swarm of extreme weather events in 2018. And this is leading onto increasing suspicion of capitalism as such. The separate and less radical notion of a Green New Deal is backed by 81% of voters. It is even backed by 57% of people calling themselves conservative Republicans.

"The Deal would generate 100% of the nation's electricity from clean, renewable sources within the next 10 years; upgrade the nation's energy grid, buildings, and transportation infrastructure; increase energy efficiency; invest in green technology research and development; and provide training for jobs in the new green economy."<sup>18</sup>

If Elizabeth Warren gets her way as President in 2020, or if it happens some other way, the USA will remain a very imperfect society. It has the world's greatest concentration of lawyers. The talk of freedom is just talk: many things are regulated, but without protection for ordinary people. But it does let you fight about a lot of things, though with a vast advantage for the rich.

Vast numbers of voters are well-meaning dopes, easily manipulated by slick propaganda served up by media that business interests either own or dominate.

There is also the Malignancy Vote, which the Centre-Right mostly gets while keeping a respectable front when gathering it. *The New York Times* recently said:

**"Small-Town America Is Dying. How Can We Save It?"**

"Aging populations, unemployment, addiction: Readers talk about the obstacles to saving rural communities".

Someone replied

"They support Trump and the reason is simple: He acts just like they would if they had money. There is no saving this culture, nor should you want to save it. The people who could have revitalized it have either left for better opportunities or been run off. It's a breeding ground for hatred and despair, dying with a Bible in one arm and a heroin needle in the other. Let it

die."<sup>19</sup>

It would die, and quickly, without massive state support. Politicians in the USA need to start saying this. Being blunt, because softness has allowed the rise of people like Trump.

And being able to fight about everything isn't freedom. Fighting makes everyone worse. It is mostly won by the rich and the dishonest – often the same people. Weaning the USA off of this fantasy will probably take decades, if it even happens. But the USA moving in a more human and humane direction would have an excellent influence on the rest of the world.

## **The New Right's False Promises**

"Despite claims to the contrary, it turns out that income inequality is not just a function of an efficiently operating market. According to the data, before taking taxes and transfers into consideration—in other words, government policy—the United States is ranked 6 among OECD countries and France is ranked 7. But then, once government policy is applied, the U.S. moves up to 4, and France drops down to 22. Therefore, U.S. government policy actually increases inequality, while French policy decreases it."<sup>20</sup>

And that was before the Yellow Vest protests. A protest which I expect to fizzle out eventually, because they are anti-state and tend not to vote. Because they have no real answer to the things they hate.

And why are so many people discontented, but baffled as to what to do about it?

From the 1960s, and growing in the 1970s and 1980s, the West got a bad dose of *Fear of the State*. Archeophobia, if you want a fancy word for it. A broad feeling that whatever the government is doing must be dangerous and bad.

From the 1930s through to the 1950s, most people had confidence in the power of governments to actually deliver what a majority of the people wanted. Then as now, it wasn't always what the liberal elite wanted. Then as now, the chosen leaders didn't always deliver what the people had wanted. And it could certainly go horribly wrong, giving people reason to fear all state power. But this was a minority view until we had a new generation that was comfortably far removed from the breakdowns in conventional politics which were the cause of fascism.

In Germany when Hitler came to power, people wanted full employment and a removal of the worse aspects of the unfair Versailles Peace Treaty. Many accepted the Nazi story that the Jews were to blame, but were bothered by Nazi harshness. And to the end, the Nazis maintained the cover story that Jews would be resettled in the East.

Massacred happened from early on, but it was only a confirmed policy of mass killing from 1942. Mass killing had not been seriously thought about before the war started. German Jews survived under viciously

<sup>18</sup> <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/the-green-new-deal-has-strong-bipartisan-support/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/22/opinion/rural-america-economy-revive.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://medium.com/@GreinerOU/the-wealth-inequality-in-france-that-is-causing-riots-is-nothing-compared-to-the-united-states-4017be3c30f6>

discriminatory laws until the British Empire chose to continue its war for Global Hegemony after the Fall of France.

Britons like to pretend now that the British Empire fighting Germany was all about concern for Hitler's victims. Those who really cared were a minority. Almost to the end, Nazi Germany was trying to push out its Jews, and the rest of the world refused to take them. There was also a flat refusal to bomb the railway lines that led to Auschwitz and other death-camps, which would have increased the number of survivors. It was part of a callous disregard by Churchill's government for anything except advantage in the post-war world. East European Jews would not have been viewed as an asset. They might be expected to embarrass Britain by wanting to enter British-mandate Palestine, as the survivors in fact did. And in a similar spirit, at least two million Bengalis were left to starve in 1943 rather than divert resources from the War Effort.<sup>21</sup>

Churchill made the real issue clear when he said:

**"If the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'"**<sup>22</sup>

When Churchill spoke of the valour of Britain's air force, '*so much owed by so many to so few*', he included bombers doing terror raids on ordinary German workers.<sup>23</sup> Subtle misdirection has led to people thinking just about fighter crews protecting Britain from the same treatment. Both sides were brave, but it was the British Empire that had long prepared for terrorist air bombing of non-military targets.

Churchill also saw the two World Wars as similar – both anti-German, regardless of who ruled Germany:

**"It is also useful to compare the first year of this second war against German aggression with its forerunner a quarter of a century ago."**<sup>24</sup>

World War One started because Germany chose to support Austria-Hungary in its demand that Serbia suffer for probable involvement in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to their throne. Killed because he was intending to give Slavs a greater role in the multi-ethnic Empire, and stood in the way of the Serbian claim to Bosnia and Herzegovina – the same claim Britain redefined as criminal in the 1990s. Killing the man and also his wife was in line with Serbs earlier killing their own King and his Queen to replace them with a rival Serb dynasty that was more solidly determined to take Bosnia as part of Greater Serbia.<sup>25</sup> That killing in 1903 was led by Dragutin Dimitrijevic, who was Chief of Serbian Military Intelligence in 1914 when the Austrian Archduke was assassinated. Serbia refused to let Austria-Hungary be involved in investigations that might have proved the man's guilt. That was the sticking point, and Russia chose to back Serbia, making war almost unavoidable.

<sup>21</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal\\_famine\\_of\\_1943](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_famine_of_1943)

<sup>22</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This\\_was\\_their\\_finest\\_hour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This_was_their_finest_hour)

<sup>23</sup> *The Few, the Bombers and the Starvationists*, <https://gwydionwilliams.com/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/45-1-more-on-fascism-the-world-wars/what-churchill-really-meant-by-the-few/>

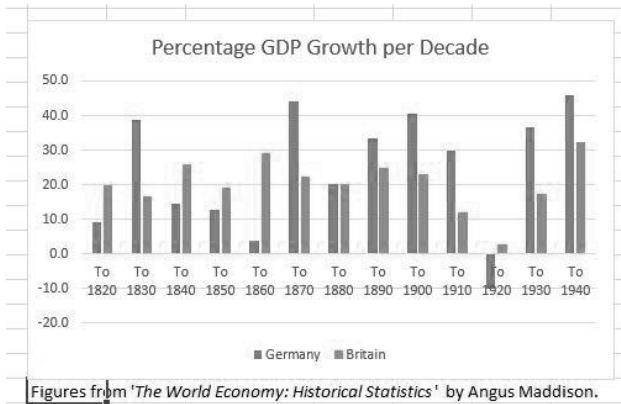
<sup>24</sup> <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/thefew.html>

<sup>25</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May\\_Coup\\_\(Serbia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Coup_(Serbia))

Commemorations in 1914 in Britain mostly dodged those awkward off-message facts. People diverted attention to the German march through Belgium, which happened only because France was the main ally Tsarist Russia.

The Franco-Russian Alliance that was formed in 1892 made no sense except as an anti-German measure. Tsarist Russia and Republican France were two Empires at opposite ends of the political spectrum of their era. (All far to the right of modern values.)

The British Empire joined the anti-German alliance in 1914, because Germany was becoming an alarmingly successful rival in the structure of Global Trade. Britain had defined it and for a long time flourished in it, but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was being overtaken.



Figures from 'The World Economy: Historical Statistics' by Angus Maddison.

World War Two started, because Poland refused a moderate offer by Hitler to tidy up the remaining disputes border with Germany. Hitler asked for Danzig to be returned to Germany, since it was an overwhelmingly German city. He was willing to concede the Polish Corridor, even though it had an ethnic-German majority. He had done something similar with the South Tyrol, so as to be on good terms with Mussolini's Italy.

Poland refused. This refusal was unwise, particularly since they'd never have got the majority-German Polish Corridor had President Wilson's supposed view of national self-determination been applied. But even Wilson had not really believed the slogan he became famous for: his *14 Points* included a demand that both Poland and Serbia get access to the sea regardless of self-determination.<sup>26</sup> Still, Hitler could have chosen to live with something he disliked, as many other leaders have. He went to war because he had a fixed belief that a war would happen in the end regardless, and thought that 1939 was an acceptable time to start it. But none of this matched public feeling, and he had to fake a Polish aggression to get the war started. And again to start his ruinous war with the Soviet Union. He pretended there was a specific Soviet intention to attack him, rather than a vague wish that was not going to be tried in the short run, and might have led to nothing.

Hitler even chose to declare war on the USA, after Japan attacked them. There were many in the USA who would have preferred to fight just Japan, but Hitler gave them no choice except to declare war on him when he was already

<sup>26</sup> See *Fourteen Points, Six Spoofs*. <https://gwydionwilliams.com/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/woodrow-wilsons-deceptive-14-points/>

at war with them. When he was already attacking shipping taking war materials from the USA to Britain, which was a brief advantage and an immense long-term cost. He had an enthusiasm for war, but very little understanding of how wars were actually won.

It would be nice to say that a multi-party government with a free press could not start a war on the basis of a pack of lies. But it would be obviously untrue: hardly anyone doubts that the attack on Iraq in 2003 was exactly that.

All of the governments that started World War One had parliaments that might theoretically have stopped it, except maybe Tsarist Russia that was Britain's ally. And both in 1914 and 2003, the leaders' understanding of how wars were actually won turned out to be deeply flawed.

You could see Hitler as an aberration within Fascism, because he alone took seriously the loose talk about war being ennobling. He alone was willing to risk a Second World War, rather than live with a set of borders that many saw as unjust. And he alone lost vast extra territories by his willingness to gamble with war.

Up to the 1960s, most people in the West admitted that both Fascism and Leninism had successfully met the needs of their people. That they had done so after liberalism and multi-party democracy had failed. Starting with Roosevelt's New Deal, it was accepted that governments could fix things without becoming dictatorships or becoming warmongers. Hazy at all times in the USA, which always fancied it had both a right and a duty to impose its own way of life on the rest of the world. But it worked out much better in Scandinavia, among other places.

What happened in the West in the 1960s was a successful attempt to overthrow existing rules about sex and marriage. Irrational rules inherited from a mediaeval understanding of Christianity, with a few odd add-ons inherited from European Paganism. Governments were not in fact strong defenders of these things. And cultural resistance was weak: the Roman Catholic Church had made itself incoherent by unexpectedly abandoning many of its traditions with its Second Vatican Council.<sup>27</sup>

It could easily have happened that Global Leninism would have been part of a whole-Earth convergence on Moderate Corporatism and tolerant social values. European and US Leninists had themselves undermined much Christian tradition, including on sexual matters, though mostly not going so far as official tolerance of homosexuality. But Khrushchev had created an immense barrier to clear understanding, by pretending that there was some enormous gulf between Lenin and Stalin. The suddenly-revived swarm of Trotskyist factions fed into this same muddle. Marxism, previously a source of coherent thinking, became a swamp of evasion and vagueness. And the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia created a split between Progressive Politics and European Leninism that was never really bridged again.

What later happened in China shows that other outcomes were possible. Even Maoism was much more in tune with 1960s radicalism, though Chinese Leninism was

conventional and intolerant on sexual outside of marriage. Mao was seen as part of general Western radicalism, though not as much as Che Guevara. Of course 'Che' held that status thanks in part to hardly anyone knowing that he approved of Stalin doing what Stalin did in the actual circumstances of the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> And Red Guard rebelliousness was seen as part of the global process and probably was, though this is one of many awkward facts that modern Western studies of China prefer not to think about.

Having let radicalism run its course from 1966 to 1976, China after Mao successfully changed itself without discarding socialism. The post-Mao system was much too tolerant of corruption and inequality, but did also become tolerant on sexual matters. This extended as far as decriminalising homosexuality in the 1990s, though this was another 'off-message fact' that the Western media were largely silent about. So much that I completely missed it, despite following Chinese events quite closely. I checked and learned of what had happened, only when I became puzzled when the matter was not mentioned in a long whine about other Chinese deviations from Western values by gay activist and general anti-government protestor Peter Tatchell.

Increasingly in the West, there was an unwillingness to admit that any government had ever done anything useful. It was no longer understood that state power had shaped the societies within which we lived. Instead we got a revival of the liberal or libertarian myth that certain freedoms were inherently true, and all that had been needed was to show the state that its attempts to change them were futile and unjust.

Events in countries that are neither Leninist nor pro-Western should show the foolishness of this belief. Progressive authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world were attacked, with lukewarm approval from Western liberals. Much harsher anti-Western values then surfaced. No one should try to remove a repressive regime without taking a good hard look at what it is that they are repressing.

Meantime in India, the decline of Congress led to the rise of Hindu hard-liners with many regressive social views. Hinduism has always had a place for homosexuals, but just as a tolerated aberration: this seems to be holding. Their general position on women was always much worse, despite the high status of a few privileged women: this remains the case despite increasing protests.

The same geniuses who organised the smashing of security and good welfare in ex-Leninist states in Europe are greatly distressed by the rise of Illiberal Democracy. But so far, they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

We could have had a sensible progressive reform of both social and economic matters in both halves of Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. It didn't happen. Instead we had scrappy and inconsistent social reforms, and a reversion to obsolete pro-capitalist and anti-state notions on the economy. The rise of Archephobe notions that whatever the government was doing must be dangerous and bad. A

<sup>27</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Vatican\\_Council](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Vatican_Council)

<sup>28</sup> <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/the-soviet-past/why-che-guavara-approved-of-stalin/>

notion that extrapolates from some governments genuinely doing things that are dangerous and bad, but fails to recognise that much worse things happen when there is no government.

The Western economy was out of balance in the 1970s. Genuine conservatives would have rebalanced it on the basis of the successful Mixed Economy that had been practiced from the 1930s. Indeed Edward Heath, having briefly considered early versions of the New Right,<sup>29</sup> reacted to his defeat by the miners in the two miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974 by seeking more Corporatism. Trade Unions were offered a role in government, and this went further when Labour came back to power with serious notions of Workers Control.<sup>30</sup>

It wasn't the then-demoralised centre-right in Britain that prevent this happening. Much of the opposition came from the centre-left and especially the Trade Unions, who supposed that things could carry on as before with increased Trade Union power. But most of the Leninist left was also against, based on a fantasy that they might get real Leninism if they could only sabotage moderate reform. There was very little support for overt Leninism, unlike France and Italy where there were gigantic Communist Parties at the time. But a totally false political calculation was made.

It wasn't so much that the Right won, as that the Left defeated itself. That it reached a dead end, and left the field clear for right-wing ideas. It allowed the successes of the New Deal and the post-war Mixed Economy to be forgotten, because they hadn't been quite the Socialist Utopia that people on the margins of politics had been calling for over the decades.

Since the entire Trotskyist movement has no positive achievements whatsoever since its break with Mainstream Leninism in the 1920s, their negative view of successes by Moderate Socialists is understandable. A failure to adjust by Mainstream Leninism is more puzzling. But it arose naturally from Khrushchev denying that what Stalin did was a logical continuation of what Lenin began. To have done this would have allowed him to say, 'the West has moved in our direction and the old antagonism can now be eased'. Instead this clever but ill-educated man created an ideological tangle that was never straightened out, and reflected his brief flirtation with Trotskyism early on. (Another thing that is very seldom mentioned, even to try to show that it was not so: but I managed to find evidence that it was indeed so.<sup>31</sup>)

I don't think there was ever much positive belief in the silly New Right story that the USA's New Deal merely delayed a recovery that would have happened anyway. But smothering the issue in silence worked much better, particularly since the left mostly failed to make an issue of it. Did not like to admit that they had been silly bunglers in the 1970s.

The older ideas of the Selsdon Group, rejected by Heath

in the 1970s, were revived in the 1980s under Thatcher. They fitted the general anti-state attitudes of the Baby Boomer generation, who also became less keen on equality as many of them joined the ranks of the privileged.

Some 1960s radicals, and particularly those with a university education, later found a natural home in New Labour. Operated 'Selsdon-Lite' or 'Left Selsdonists'. Lacked the guts to say that those ideas had failed except as a way of feeding unearned wealth to a small more-than-millionaire elite. This small more-than-millionaire elite had formidable power in the media. And some of New Labour, most notably Tony Blair, were able to join it.

By the time of the 2017 British election, Labour was once again radical. 60% or more of people under 30 voted Labour. But sadly, people born between 1948 and 1957 voted 58% Tory to 27% Labour.<sup>32</sup> That's talking about my generation, and I fear that most of us will have to die off before Britain can start improving. But those like me who remember actual events, can advise the new generation.

When the Selsdon Group were prominent under Heath, Harold Wilson spoke mockingly about 'Selsdon Man'. And as revived under Thatcher, they were indeed no more authentic than Piltdown Man. Actual centre-right governments bumped into reality into reality in 1987, when the Western economy came closer to collapsing than it had since the 1930s. And the governments fixed it by a burst of public spending. They gave every sign that New Right ideas were being abandoned again, as they had been abandoned under Heath.

Then in 1989, the Soviet Union began collapsing. Gorbachev's incoherent talk of reform led to the overthrow of a set of weak Leninist regimes that had depended on Moscow and its armies. We also saw the fall of independent Leninist regimes in Romania and Albania, where the local ideology was clearly not strong enough to withstand a general European trend. But note that it didn't apply worldwide: even the Moscow-dependant Mongolian Republic had the Communist Party re-elected the first time they tried open elections. Still, it was enough to demoralise the left and boost the New Right.

But what was practiced was no longer serious Libertarianism. The ideas were used as a cover for using state power to feed vast amounts of tax money to a tiny more-than-millionaire elite, while also letting them avoid most taxes. Ordinary people paid as much tax as ever, and still had plenty of regulations imposed on them. The real politics were *Plutophile* rather than *Archephobe*.

It should not be called conservatism. The more New Right policies have had influence, the more existing social values have broken down, with nothing much to replace them. And the voters are kept contents with demonstrations of hard-line attitudes, mostly futile. In Britain it has been extreme intolerance to any non-white person born overseas who might have a flaw in their paperwork. In the USA it is Trump's border wall, even though illegal immigration is largely under control already.

In Britain, we should may be speak of 'The Former Tory Party'. Once, it had a successful mix of reactionary values

<sup>29</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selsdon\\_Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selsdon_Group)

<sup>30</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report\\_of\\_the\\_committee\\_of\\_inquiry\\_on\\_industrial\\_democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report_of_the_committee_of_inquiry_on_industrial_democracy)

<sup>31</sup> *Khrushchev Had a Little-Known Trotskyist Past*, <https://gwydionwilliams.com/history-and-philosophy/khrushchev-influenced-by-trotskyism/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://gwydionmw.quora.com/British-Tories-rely-on-the-Old-and-the-Uncultured>. This used the most relevant age-band in a YouGov survey; people aged between 60 and 69

and genuine conservatism. What we have now is right-wing nihilism.

## Fighting Fires for Profit and Damnation

“For-Profit Firefighting Was Terrible for America. Climate Change Is Bringing It Back...

“Fire protection, like education and clean water, is now generally considered a public good. These services benefit everyone, and reflect the principle that every person has a right to basic safety. But since the Reagan era, the U.S. has aggressively moved to privatize public services: education, healthcare, water, prisons, fire protection, and more.

“Recent natural disasters have made the impact of these reforms apparent: When things go wrong, the wealthy can pay to make them right, while others suffer. During Hurricane Katrina, which disproportionately affected black residents, rich New Orleanians hired private security guards from companies like Blackwater to guard their homes. After Hurricane Maria, which cut Puerto Rico’s power for nearly a year, wealthy islanders who didn’t flee bought expensive generators to keep their lights on.”<sup>33</sup>

These are socially damaging policies favoured by rich people who have legal ways to subsidise and boost politicians who excuse them from paying taxes. And may believe the Libertarian dogma that it will all work out somehow. Most business people are ignorant outside of their own little area of expertise, and often aggressively ignorant. Rich people who have just inherited it are occasionally better, but much more often worse.

California has a particular problem. It was a pioneer of New Right notions, and is now suffering because of them. Suffering because of a climate shift that the USA has been refusing to properly face up to:

“While California’s climate has always been fire prone, the link between climate change and bigger fires is inextricable. ‘Behind the scenes of all of this, you’ve got temperatures that are about two to three degrees Fahrenheit warmer now than they would’ve been without global warming ... ‘That dries out vegetation even more, making it more likely to burn.’”<sup>34</sup>

There have also been errors in management:

“It’s counterintuitive, but the United States’ history of suppressing wildfires has actually made present-day wildfires worse... Every time we fought a fire successfully, that means that a bunch of stuff that would have burned didn’t burn. And so over the last hundred years we’ve had an accumulation of plants in a lot of areas...

“In recent years, the United States Forest Service has been trying to rectify the previous practice through the use of prescribed or ‘controlled’

burns.”<sup>35</sup>

That was what Trump was getting at when he blamed bad management for the fires. But he was also wanting to let loggers get everywhere, which would not help. He has been immensely damaging, by denying that Climate Change is real. And foolish, in taking such a stand at a time when the real and observable weather is showing how false it is.

Abnormal weather has always happened. But not the concentration of many different abnormalities that we saw in 2018, and will probably see again in 2019 and thereafter.

Things are now seen, that have not been seen in recorded history:

“According to local meteorologist Rob Elvington, the Camp Fire began under atmospheric conditions with ‘no analog/comparison’ in history for the date. Northern California’s vegetation dryness was off the charts — exceeding the 99th percentile for any single day as far back as local records go. ‘Worse than no rain is negative rain,’ wrote Elvington. The air was so dry, it was sucking water out of the land.”<sup>36</sup>

Life has been through worse. Lizards will survive, and also humans in those parts of the world where things don’t get too bad. But major disasters and the deaths of tens of millions seem very possible.

## Yesterday’s Modernism: the USA’s Decline

A recent forecast says that China will become a bigger economy than the USA by 2020. And that by 2030, India will also overtake the USA and be much closer to China.<sup>37</sup>

Some estimates say China has been ahead for several years now: these take account of the lower prices for similar goods in China.<sup>38</sup> And it remains a mid-ranking nation by wealth per head: 76<sup>th</sup> out of 186 in 2017 according to the World Bank.

China has sound foundations, and it was Mao who laid them. I detailed earlier how China was already growing faster than the USA or Britain during his rule. He was doing well, contrary to what Western sources like to imply without technically lying about the matter.

Unlike both the USA and India, and lately Brazil, China is not burdened by tens of millions of people with absurd and reactionary religious beliefs. Which is not an accident: it is the context in which you should see their harsh attitude to a weird little sect called Falun Gong.

Marxism is imperfect, but is much the best basis for understanding the world as it actually is. Liberalism, having massively reformed itself after its failures in the 1930s, currently pretends that these failures never happened. Pretends that it was the voice of sweet reason

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> <https://grist.org/article/the-bizarre-and-frightening-conditions-that-sparked-the-camp-fire/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/us-economy-could-slip-from-top-spot-in-2020-and-keep-slipping-analysts-say-2019-01-14>

<sup>38</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_GDP\\_\(PPP\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP))

<sup>33</sup> <https://medium.com/s/thenewnew/for-profit-firefighting-was-terrible-for-america-climate-change-is-bringing-it-back-3898442f1cd4>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/09/climate/why-california-fires.html>

for all of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The awkward fact of liberal enthusiasm for the First World War is shoved aside, along with other off-message facts.

The New Right is also failing:

“Reaganomics is on the ropes...

“What once seemed a coherent economic philosophy has become a laughing stock. But the Republicans don’t know what else to do. In its place, they have resorted to race-baiting, which only serves to further alienate the most educated people in society—the same people who actually see some economic benefit from these tax cuts.”<sup>39</sup>

“We don’t often think about it, but Austerity is an American invention. So much so that Americans have never really experienced anything but austerity. America has never invested in itself as a society—building robust public goods, like a national healthcare system, transport network, retirement system, safety nets, and so on. From the time of Jefferson to Reagan to Obama, America has been a society in which people have been told to compete viciously against one another—instead of simply providing each other the things they are competing for, healthcare, retirement, income, jobs, and so forth. Compete with each other! Never invest in each other! That is the rule by which America has always been governed. The results, today, are plain to see: they have been catastrophic. The average American lives a shorter, poorer, meaner, dumber life than anywhere else in the rich world, beset by gruesome and bizarre dilemmas, like his life savings, or his life, when he’s ill.”<sup>40</sup>

Good as far as it goes. But as I said earlier, Austerity also fed off 1960s radicalism, which was mostly anti-state, especially in the USA. People who liked the idea of a return to Real Capitalism, and still don’t quite understand why it has not happened.

From the 1980s, there has been a shameless plundering by the rich of wealth that is still collectively produced.

We still have Corporatism, the thing that terrified many at the time. But it is Feed-the-Rich Corporatism.

Curing this must include avoiding the fantasy that small production in a modern economy can be more than a delicate flower needing cultivation. The dangerous fantasy that it would flourish if only the wicked government were removed.

A continued decline of independent small production since the 1980s does not seem to have taught anyone anything. A government that intentionally chose to boost small property would probably succeed. But you could break your heart trying to get small-property people to believe it as a general principle. They will accept government cash, mostly, but fail to accurately generalise from this.

I’ve said this before, and also that they are not going to

break my heart. I have given an accurate description. Someone who cared could take it up and try to win over small-property-owners to a different sort of politics. But I’d expect it to come to nothing.

What is more realistic is for Labour to drop its traditional attitude of being against small property and against farmers. They *were* once reactionary social blocks; particularly small shopkeepers. But they are now so weak that it would make sense for Labour in Britain to throw them a lifeline. Hope to win over a few, and neutralise many more.

Regardless, Labour must attack the notion that Free Markets and Non-Regulation have ever been more than slogans. In the real world, business interests carefully try to influence and supervises government, on a selfish basis. On their own areas of expertise, they are well aware that ‘less government’ is not realistic if you also want ‘more wealth’. But they can and do monopolise the benefits, where the public is either trusting or misled.

But that is business, not the politicians. The Right have totally the wrong answers. But the more their methods fail to work, the angrier they get. Trump in the USA and Brexit in Britain *might* be the final spasms, but that is no more than a hope.

## Discreditable Universal Credit

Capitalism from the 1920s has kept itself alive by borrowing ideas from socialism. The New Right notion of purging these from economic management has largely failed. But obviously you can move away from socialist notions of a caring society by just not caring. By letting people suffer and die, while claiming it is their own fault.

Shooting everyone at age 65 would genuinely boost the national economy. It would solve the supposed problem of having less working people to support the retired. But obviously no one is going to try, though killing the old and the otherwise unwanted by neglect and hostile checks for supposed fraud can do it on a small scale.

That has been the real basis of Britain’s ‘Universal Credit’. Reversing the normal rules, people claiming needs are considered guilty of exaggerating. Guilty until proven otherwise, and required to produce strong proof that they are in fact innocent.

Everything possible is done to encourage rich people from almost anywhere to exploit ordinary Britons:

“A Liverpool tower block that had more housing prosecutions in 2017 than any other building was 80% owned by international investors, some of whom were banking publicly funded rents while subjecting tenants to potential danger from hazardously low temperatures.

“Mill View tower, a 16-storey former council-owned high rise in Toxteth, attracted 13 prosecutions last year for Elite Property Management and Lettings Ltd, a local firm that was managing 13 of the flats. The flats had cost around £60,000 each in 2013 and were all rented

<sup>39</sup> <https://medium.com/@GreinerOU/reaganomics-is-on-the-ropes-d559ffa9ed7a>

<sup>40</sup> <https://eand.co/how-austerity-ripped-the-world-apart-3bf944bd8352>.

to residents claiming housing benefit. The company was prosecuted for licensing offences... "11 out of the 13 flats that were later the focus of the prosecutions were owned by overseas investors – based as far away as Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Malaysia..." "From a relatively stable housing system where the government provided homes for people that couldn't access them through the market ... we've now gone to an unregulated system where rents are much higher because UK property has become such an attractive asset to international investors."<sup>41</sup>

The official view is an ultra-capitalist notion that wringing out the last drop of possible profit for owners or shareholders is not only allowable, but moral. The only way to bring the benefits of wealth to the entire human race. The beautiful business people should be given whatever they want.

This has not even been good for them, in the long run. The unavoidable Climate Change caused by the rise of human civilisation is going to go a lot further than it might, because business wanted to shirk its costly responsibilities. Because far too many governments have helped them do this.

## Yes, We Have No Conservatives

I said before that the New Right have not met their promise of saving old-fashioned value. If the pledge was honest, which it may not have been, the understanding was shallow. They methods they used were bound to break down whatever old-fashioned values were not already wrecked.

Here is another example:

"On a scale of zero to six, where zero signified 'completely straight' and six meant 'completely homosexual,' more than a third of the young demographic chose a number between one and five, indicating that they were bisexual to some degree. Only 24 percent of their older counterparts identified this way.

"Fifty-six percent of 13-to-20-year-olds said that they knew someone who went by gender neutral pronouns such as 'they,' 'them,' or 'ze,' compared to 43 percent of people aged 28 to 34 years old. Over a third of Gen Z respondents also strongly agreed that gender did not define a person as much as it used to. This figure dropped to 23 percent among millennials who were 28 and up."<sup>42</sup>

But it is also not a matter of 'anything goes':

"A large proportion of young people in England are shunning alcohol completely, a study has

suggested.

"Researchers said abstaining from alcohol was becoming 'more mainstream' among people aged 16 to 24 after the analysis showed a rise in the proportion of non-drinkers.

"The research, published in the journal BMC Public Health, found more than 25% of young people classed themselves as 'non-drinkers'.

"University College London's researchers said the norms around drinking appeared to be changing.

"They studied data from the annual health survey for England and found the proportion of 16- to 24-year-olds who do not drink alcohol had increased from 18% in 2005 to 29% in 2015.

"Meanwhile, the proportion of 'lifetime abstainers' rose from 9% to 17%. The study also appeared to show fewer young people were drinking harmful amounts.

"In 2005, 43% said they drank above the recommended limits, but this proportion had fallen to 28% 10 years later."<sup>43</sup>

This makes sense. Alcohol does damage if over-used. If you can along without it, that's fine. But your sexual choices ought to make you happier.

If your culture has shifted so that drinking alcohol is not part of normal social life – not true when I was young, back in the 1960s – then not drinking at all is sensible. No one can be sure when they start whether they will actually stay within sensible limits.

And while people in the West have mostly been persuaded that the loss of Western privilege means a dismal future, those now gaining something closer to equality feel otherwise:

"Teenagers in Kenya and Mexico are more optimistic about their future than those in France and Sweden, according to polling across 15 countries, which found young people in developing nations have more positive outlooks.

"The survey, conducted by Ipsos and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, found young people across all countries were more optimistic than adults, though there was widespread dissatisfaction with politicians.

"More than nine in 10 teenagers in Kenya, Mexico, China, Nigeria and India reported feeling positive about their future. Their responses contrasted with those of young people in France and Sweden, the most pessimistic of countries surveyed."<sup>44</sup>

And even in the West, a clear majority of the young are optimistic. It is sad that a minority think life could not be worth living without people to feel superior to. But with luck, such dismal unfortunates are a dying breed.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/oct/24/freezing-uk-tower-block-was-cash-cow-for-foreign-investors>

<sup>42</sup> [https://broadly.vice.com/en\\_us/article/kb4dvz/teens-these-days-are-queer-as-new-study-says](https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/kb4dvz/teens-these-days-are-queer-as-new-study-says)

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/oct/10/young-people-drinking-alcohol-study-england>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/ng-interactive/2018/sep/24/our-time-is-now-world-youth-poll-reveals-unexpected-optimism>

## Yellow Jackets – Today's Luddites

Luddites in Britain smashed machines. Delayed their spread, but in the end lost. Only when they started joining Trade Unions did things get better for them.

Likewise in France, people forced by economics into the new factories sometimes broke machines by tossing their wooden shoes into the works. Achieved little. And even the story that the term 'sabotage' comes from this seems wrong:

"A popular but false account of the origin of the term's present meaning is the story that less wealthy workers in France, who wore not leather but wooden shoes, used to throw these sabots into the machines to disrupt production. This account is not supported by the etymology. Rather, the French source word literally means to 'walk noisily,' as was done by sabot-wearing labourers, who interrupted production by means of labor disputes, not damage."<sup>45</sup>

Now we have the French yellow jackets, making a protest that I see as understandable and with some good points. But also as equally doomed:

"Their revolt has been prompted by a sharp rise in the price of diesel and unleaded petrol at the pump, which they blame on President Macron's fossil fuel tax. This is a drivers' movement, at least at first sight, and despite the turmoil on the Champs Elysées, it is deeply provincial..."

"The movement took off in mid-November, when thousands of people in hi-vis jackets turned out across the country at major junctions and minor roundabouts. The aim was to slow up traffic, or halt it, and share their anger with other motorists idling in neutral (racking up their CO2 emissions). The gilets jaunes also set up human chicanes – between 20 and 200 protesters – outside petrol stations and supermarkets where they could buttonhole consumers who'd dodged the roundabouts by taking by-roads ..

"Drivers in France are obliged to have hi-vis tops in their vehicles at all times: people who support the gilets jaunes – or claim to – have taken to placing theirs in a hi-vis position, wedged between the dashboard and the windscreen in a show of solidarity (or hope of a *laissez-passer*)..."

"There are no gilet jaune leaders, only eccentric figureheads and pop-up advocates. One is Jacline Mouraud, a fifty-something accordion-player who has composed a new French national anthem (she didn't like the violence of the *Marseillaise*)..."

"Far more significant is Priscilla Ludosky, a Martinican 33-year-old living in built-up peri-urban countryside an hour south of Paris. She put together a petition last month for lower fuel taxes. It is ticking towards one million signatures. A poll published on Wednesday put support in France

for the gilets jaunes at 84 per cent...

"Macron has embarked on an admirable policy to mitigate climate change but he's failed catastrophically to heed the advice of the former environment minister, Nicolas Hulot, who resigned in August. Hulot said the project would only work with grants, attainable tax incentives and green job creation for less advantaged sectors of the population. Not nearly enough of this is in place, or even in the offing."<sup>46</sup>

Macron is one of those still believing New Right nonsense. People rightly reject this:

"'I'm prepared to spend Christmas protesting at this roundabout with my children – we won't back down and we've got nothing to lose,' said the 41-year-old, who voted for Macron in last year's presidential election. 'He gave good speeches and I really believed his promises that he would change France. But not any more.'

"Céline, a classroom assistant for children with special needs, earns €800 (£710) a month. She cannot afford rent so lives with her four children in a relative's house in the suburbs of Toulouse, in the south-west of France.

"'Macron's first move in office was to slash the wealth tax for the mega-rich while cutting money from poor people's housing benefits,' she said. 'That is a serious injustice. The country is rising up and he's staying silent, he's hiding in an ivory tower, that's what disturbs me, he's not taking responsibility.'"<sup>47</sup>

But where are the positive answers? France's once-strong Communists have almost vanished, discredited when Moscow Rule failed. And the once-strong Socialists caught the New Labour habit of treating New Right nonsense as an unwelcome truth.

In the 2017 election, the Communists got 1.73% and the Socialists 5.2%.<sup>48</sup> Macron's *La République En Marche!*, meaning something like 'On The Move!', got 53.38. But now it is *La République En Merde!*: they are in the shit.

But the protests are incoherent, and at times anti-social. They have apparently broken 60% of France's speed cameras.<sup>49</sup> I suspect most of them favour the doomed notion of having no authority. Would see it in personal terms: 'I'd like to speed'. Not socially: 'speeding kills people'.

## East German suffering

"Frank Dehmel was on the streets of East Germany in 1989. Every Monday, he marched against the Communist regime, demanding freedom and democracy and chanting with the crowds: "We are the people!"

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2018/11/30/jeremy-harding/dont-pretend-you-can't-see-us/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/07/macrons-arrogance-unites-us-on-the-barricades-with-frances-gilets-jaunes>

<sup>48</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017\\_French\\_legislative\\_election#Results](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_French_legislative_election#Results)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-46822472>

<sup>45</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabotage#Etymology>

"Three decades later, Mr. Dehmel is on the streets again, older and angrier, and chanting the same slogan — this time for the far right.

"He won freedom and democracy when the Berlin Wall came down 29 years ago on Nov. 9. But he lost everything else: His job, his status, his country — and his wife. Like so many eastern women, she went west to look for work and never came back.

"To understand why the far right is on the march again in Germany, it helps to understand the many grievances of its most loyal supporters: men in the former Communist East...

"The disappointed hopes and humiliations of 1989 ... still fester [in East Germany].

"Some three million jobs, most of them in traditionally male industries, were lost over two years. The working-class heroes of Socialism became the working-class losers of capitalism...

"Long before the #MeToo movement, Communism succeeded in creating a broad class of women who were independent, emancipated, often better educated and working in more adaptable service jobs than eastern men.

"After the wall came down, the East lost more than 10 percent of its population. Two-thirds of those who left and did not come back were young women."<sup>50</sup>

All of Europe's ex-Leninist regimes neglected the welfare of ordinary people, when the system collapsed. It was the heyday of the New Right, with idiotic notions that governments doing nothing and letting cash guide everything would produce a fine outcome.

Neglecting the ex-Leninist countries was not the ingenious fraud that some of its critics suppose. A lot of money was looted, indeed, especially from Russia. But for anyone with an accurate long-term view, it should have been obvious that this would backfire horribly.

George Soros did correctly say that a Marshall Plan was needed: but that was before he became famous and he was ignored. It also seems beyond him to connect the rejection of his best-ever idea and the current hostility to the West by Putin. With the awkward fact that 90% of Russians fully back Putin on the matter.

Those countries taken into the European Union were to some degree looked after, though the flourishing of Illiberal Democracy in Hungary, Poland etc. should not have surprised anyone. And yet it does: Liberals are full of the notion that liberalism is the only possible answer. They never admit how much the label 'liberalism' has changed over the centuries, particularly in the decades after its massive 1930s failure.

East Germany was a special case. Up until the collapse, it had been accepted as a strong economy. But once it no longer had a specific government or state machine looking after its interests, it was suddenly 'discovered' that it never had any merits. Discovered that it should be broken down into raw material to be absorbed by the virtuous West

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/05/world/europe/merkel-east-germany-nationalists-populism.html>

Germans. This was accepted by many born in East Germany, including Mrs Merkel. But does not appeal to those left behind.

And once again, socialists are still mired in unjustified belief in New Right values:

"Part of the party's problem is that Ms. Merkel's conservatives have co-opted many of the center-left's ideas, from the introduction of the minimum wage to the establishment of same-sex marriage, and in doing so both embraced and suffocated the Social Democrats.

"But there's another, self-inflicted reason for the malaise of the SPD. In the past two decades the Social Democrats have shifted to the right economically, but (perhaps as a compensation) to the left culturally. This may be fine for the country's urban upper classes, but it leaves most German voters confused about the party's appeal...

"Beginning in the 2000s under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, the SPD were the ones who legislated many of the reforms that created today's imbalances. They not only introduced drastic cutbacks in social welfare; the party also initiated a tax reform that lowered the top rate from 53 to 42 percent."<sup>51</sup>

Worryingly, the German economy actually shrunk in the third quarter of 2018.<sup>52</sup>

## Rich and Undeserving

If hairdressers were three times better off compared to other workers than they had been in 1980s, but were doing a rather worse job, I think most people would be pretty annoyed at them.

This has really happened for a vast managerial and business class. People who get vastly bigger salaries than similar people back in the 1950s and 1960s, even allowing for overall economic growth.

"The top 1 percent of earners have more than tripled their salaries. Today, the ultra-wealthy earn on average \$1.3 million a year, according to a research paper in the Washington Center for Equitable Growth from ... Thomas Piketty... In the 1980s, it was \$420,000. Meanwhile, the salaries for the bottom 50 percent of earners have been stagnant at \$16,000 over the same time period."<sup>53</sup>

That's the USA, the model the Tories wants us to follow. Things are not quite as bad in Britain, but their mission is to bring us closer. Austerity has applied to everyone *except the rich*. The Tories believe that they still get far less than they merit. Represent a business elite who nowadays claim that all wealth exists only thanks to their extraordinary merits.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/26/opinion/whats-wrong-with-germanys-social-democrats.html>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/14/german-economy-shrinks-for-first-time-since-2015>

<sup>53</sup> <https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/my-money/articles/2017-08-10/12-staggering-statistics-about-financial-inequality-in-the-us>

"A lot of people are getting very lucky because of the way our economy is structured. They're working hard. They're also getting very lucky. The janitor works hard to clean up their office at the end of the day. But because of the way that we structure the economy, the janitors [in the USA] haven't gotten a raise in 40 years.

"My point in using the word 'luck' is to highlight the power of these macroeconomic forces that are creating these consistently massive windfalls for a small number of people, again and again—while everyone else is struggling to make ends meet."<sup>54</sup>

Or does an 'invisible hand' for them to do, as Adam Smith argued?

"Only one in every five of the UK's super-rich have even a tiny fraction of their assets held in sustainable investments, according to research which reveals that wealthy Britons are lagging behind Chinese and Brazilian millionaires in investing their money ethically."<sup>55</sup>

But surely economic freedom means rewards for those who merit it?

"A Nobel Prize-winning physicist sold his medal for \$765,000 to pay medical bills.

"Leon Lederman won a Nobel Prize in 1988 for his pioneering physics research.

"But in 2015, the physicist, who passed away Wednesday, sold his Nobel Prize medal for \$765,000 to pay his mounting medical bills. The University of Chicago professor began to suffer from memory loss in 2011, and died in an Idaho nursing home."<sup>56</sup>

Just one hard-luck story? I asked on Quora if any Nobel Prize winners were millionaires.<sup>57</sup> None were suggested: not even the economists who flatter the rich. Instead I got pointed to an existing study:

"The inventions and discoveries of Nobel Prize winners are often society changing, but many of the laureates don't actually benefit from their research, at least financially.

"Most recipients don't become wealthier after getting the Nobel Prize,' said Bruno Strasser, assistant professor of history of science & medicine at Yale University. 'However, it depends on how you define wealthy'..."

"A typical average income for a [senior] scientist is in the lower-six figures,' Strasser said. 'However, many can make extra money by giving talks, sitting on a company boards and working on book deals.'

"The prize does give these scientists a celebrity

status in their field, meaning they'll turn the heads of other prestigious scientists...

"The main reason why many Nobel Prize winners don't go on to make millions from their discoveries is because they are often awarded for fairly abstruse work that is theoretical. ... Laws of nature and ideas are not patentable... 'Nobel Prizes have been given for identifying or developing such laws, but there is no direct profit for those scientists.'..."

"There are indeed wealthy scientists currently working in the field, including J. Craig Venter, known for his work with the human genome, and Herbert Boyer, famous for his genetic engineering experiments, said Strasser. However, they have yet to receive the Nobel Prize...

"Werner Arber -- who won the Nobel prize for the discovery of so-called restriction enzymes in 1978 -- was approached many times to work for the lucrative pharmaceutical industry or biotech companies, but never did. Meanwhile, 1959 laureate Arthur Kornberg tried, but as he tells in his autobiography, "The Golden Helix: Inside Biotech Ventures" (University Science Books, 1995), he never felt comfortable in that environment."<sup>58</sup>

It also shows that world class work can be done without enormous salaries. Even the best scientists get incomes 'in the lower-six figures'. That's in the USA, with "*annual median personal income at \$31,099 in 2016*".<sup>59</sup> A modest proposal for Fair Inequality would be no one to get more than five times the average: that would be \$155,495. And in any case, most scientists do their important prize-winning work while still junior and not well-paid.

How did we get talked into believing that wealth and merit mostly went together? By flattery and dishonesty. People were led in directions that the occasional honest argument for Libertarian values would never have lured them.

The 1970s saw a lot of fiction that fed into personal rebelliousness without making the serious demands that actual rebelliousness would mean. *Star Wars* was the best, and has all along has doubtful morals. The Death Star is a massive illegal prison, presumably holding mostly political prisoners, but no thought is given to freeing them when Princess Leia is rescued. And while sacrificing their lives to save the core of the Rebellion might have been a grim necessity, the film makers choose not to upset their audience by making an issue of hard choices like that.

The 1970s were also the twilight of a long period in which hereditary rulers could be glamorised without anyone thinking it was undemocratic. In the Anakin trilogy, set earlier in the imagined history but filmed much later, the royal titles are given an improbably republican gloss.

There is worse. 'Droids' are self-aware, but no one worries about owning them. Nor about constantly forcing

<sup>54</sup> <https://medium.com/bloomberg/this-facebook-co-founder-wants-to-tax-the-rich-387e3bc1c6ff>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/sep/19/only-20-of-rich-britons-hold-ethical-assets-study-finds>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.vox.com/health-care/2018/10/4/17936626/leon-lederman-nobel-prize-medical-bills>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.quora.com/How-many-Nobel-Prize-winners-have-been-millionaires>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.livescience.com/8752-nobel-prize-winners-wealthy.html>

<sup>59</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal\\_income\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_income_in_the_United_States)

the timid C-3PO into danger, and treating his feelings as a joke.<sup>60</sup> And there were valid complaints about an absence of positive non-white characters in the film that began it all. They did correct this later, but only with two of the common Afro-American stereotypes – the man of violence and the cunning trickster, though shown as being on the side of virtue. Prostitutes of any race were never explicitly shown, which is standard for most Anglo fiction. There are two niche markets: for unrealistically glamorised prostitutes and prostitutes either murdered or connected with murder. But while violence rampages freely, the common phenomenon of commercial sex is mostly ignored.

Maybe more influential is the continuous Hollywood tradition of wildly dangerous car chases, *in which only bad people every get hurt*, except very occasionally when you need to boost the hero by showing them bravely living through injury. The reality – that even modest speeding is very likely to kill innocents – would imply social control and the need for personal morality.

Functional New Right politics had to win over conventional right-wingers, who before that had correctly seen social control of business as a matter of survival rather than some trick by socialists. But it was fairly easy to spread the notion that financial losses for very rich people would be a universal disaster. And unsurprising that very rich people like the notion. Likewise the media they own or dominate push the doctrine. What's odd is how much they get believed.

Believed even when it is visibly not working. Society got freer in the 1970s: from the 1980s onwards it has got nastier. Trust has declined:

"From Adam Smith onwards, economists have recognised that trust is the glue that binds societies together. Nations in which people trust each other have stronger institutions, are more open, have less corruption, grow faster and are nicer places to live. Trust is notable by its absence in police states.

"So it is a matter of concern that trust has become an increasingly rare commodity. In the US, there has been a precipitous drop in faith in the government. Almost four out of five Americans trusted Washington to do the right thing when Eisenhower and John F Kennedy were in the White House. Under Donald Trump, that has fallen to one in five. In Britain, Theresa May is trying to finesse a Brexit deal at a time when parliament is even less trusted than the banks. By a distance, the most trusted institution in the UK is the military. We don't trust big business, we don't trust the City, we don't trust the newspapers – and we certainly don't trust politicians...

"It certainly has not helped that the supposedly perfect model of free-market capitalism constructed before the [2008] crash was based on erroneous assumptions and was operated – in many cases – by self-seeking crooks.

<sup>60</sup> For more on this, see <https://gwydionwilliams.com/my-science-fiction/the-moral-void-in-star-wars/>

"When Milton Friedman famously said it was the duty of corporate executives to make as much money as possible, he was careful to add the rider that they still had to play by the rules and abide by ethical customs. This was certainly not the case in Wall Street and the City of London in the early and mid-2000s – and the general public woke up to that fact...

"Where inequality was higher, the poor tended to feel powerless. Sensing that their views were not represented in the political system, they opted out of civic engagement.

"A more permissive approach to top pay has led to a loosening of the bonds that hold society together. The argument that there is a trade-off between economic dynamism and less inequality doesn't really wash. Innovators came up with great new ideas when societies were more equal. What's more, there are countries that are both highly competitive and egalitarian.

"Sweden is one such country. It has proved capable of growing just as quickly as the US, but with more generous welfare and longer life expectancy."<sup>61</sup>

What was wrong with both Adam Smith and Milton Friedman is they thought business ethics would flourish without strong enforcement. And used the silly argument that since honesty is best for everyone, everyone must like it.

Honesty by *other people* does indeed serve my selfish interest. But as for me myself being honest – not always. In real societies, there is always the strong temptation to break rules that you want other people to follow. I've done a study of this: *The Disagreement Between Anyone and Everyone*.<sup>62</sup> Enforceable rules may hamper each of us a little, but we are likely to gain a lot more than we lose.

Libertarianism depends on a fantasy that we can break rules we wish to see upheld, without anything too nasty happening. Nothing like running over a child while engaging in a high-speed car-chase for some excellent reason. Nothing like having to intimidate or even murder a witness to something criminal we did for reasons that seemed admirable to us, but which they get prissy about and might talk.

I've not myself ever done anything remotely criminal, but also I have never faced any significant temptations. On minor everyday matters, I rate myself as less selfish than most people nowadays, but certainly not perfect. Not fit to be left to do as I pleased without some sort of law to keep me in order.

Though I am not religious, I do endorse several of the sentiments voiced by Jesus, including '**lead us not into temptation**'. But I don't believe in any supernatural being likely to 'deliver us from evil'. Humans do that, if it is done at all. And humans organised as a state that has to take a wider view of life are more likely to do this than humans struggling to stay alive and prosper and often not

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/25/trust-equal-gap-rich-poor-inequality>

<sup>62</sup> <https://gwydionwilliams.com/history-and-philosophy/contradictions-in-human-nature-make-rational-self-interest-impossible/>

wanting to be burdened by the needs of others.

‘Lead us not into temptation’ is from the Lord’s Prayer. A modern version ‘improved’ this to read ‘save us from the time of trial’.<sup>63</sup> Typical of the incoherence and ineffectiveness of most modern Christianity.

## Brexit

As at 25<sup>th</sup> January, it is all up in the air. Few MPs want the odium of a No-Deal Brexit. Few want to lose voters by being held responsible for a Second Referendum, which could be seen as a defiance of the original democratic choice. But MPs voted two to one against May’s deal, which was probably the best on offer.

MPs are agreed on what they are against. Are having trouble deciding what they will do to get Britain out of this mess, since No-Deal will happen automatically unless they decide otherwise. It undermines Britain’s global standing. Undermines it just as much as President Trump and the current US Federal Government shutdown has for the USA:

“No European country is better understood in Brussels than Britain. Many European officials grew up adoring The Smiths or Manchester United, studied in the UK and now work mostly in English. So when Britain’s foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt compared the EU to the USSR, Brussels understood he was merely pandering to the Conservative party conference. That still didn’t satisfy Britain’s Polish and Baltic friends, who remembered the actual USSR. They had been trying to nudge Michel Barnier, the EU’s chief negotiator, towards generosity over Brexit. Now they won’t bother any more.

“The UK’s conduct of Brexit has been a study in how to lose friends and alienate people.”<sup>64</sup>

“Of course, it’s impossible to generalise about the views of some 450 million Europeans, but among the leaders and official representatives of the 27 other member states, and the European institutions, there is a remarkable degree of consensus. They are fed up to the back teeth with how long the Brexit drama has taken and how unrealistic the British side has been.

“If you sit with Germans talking to the French, or Poles talking to Italians, it’s as if Brexit has already happened.”<sup>65</sup>

Meaning that a reversal, if it happens, will leave Britain obliged to accept the Continental view. It would be a further stage in the Decline and Fall of the British Empire.

What’s likely to happen next is a series of delays. Mrs

May maybe hoped that the perils of a No-Deal Brexit will win over enough MPs to get her deal accepted. But delay needs European approval. They should be firm on this and say the automatic exit will still happen unless Britain gives its citizens a second chance, now that they know what Brexit really means.

Whatever they do, I can’t see it ending except with a second vote, since everyone knows that No-Deal would be an immediate disaster. That it would sink the careers of anyone held responsible. I was predicting that as far back as November,<sup>66</sup> even though the various delays and evasions surprised me.

In another campaign, I would have my own slogan:

**Brexit promised you a rose-garden.**

**Delivered a briar patch.**

**Are you rabbits?**

## China Still Advancing

“China’s Leader Says Party Must Control ‘All Tasks,’ and Asian Markets Slump...

“Facing deepening tensions abroad and anxieties at home, China’s leader, Xi Jinping, delivered an unabashed defense of his policies on Tuesday, using a key anniversary to argue that his recipe of guided growth under strong Communist Party control must not waver...

“It was precisely because we’ve adhered to the centralized and united leadership of the party that we were able to achieve this great historic transition,” Mr. Xi said.”<sup>67</sup>

Shares slump, because it is affirmed that business people will not be allowed to ignore public interest in pursuit of profit. Limiting them and imposing rules on them turns out to be best for wealth creation, as well as social justice.

The report is from the *New York Times*, so naturally they do not link China’s independent attitudes to the massive failures of Western politics and economics after the centre-left surrendered to New Right Economics in the 1990s. They were part of that surrender, and are slow to adjust.

China is not a threat in the way that Leninist Russia was. The Soviet Union never entirely lost the notion of itself as the nucleus of a future World State. But in practice, it was just Russia writ large. While China never had any such ambition. Even Imperial China was interested mostly in absorbing territories that could become fully part of its civilisation. States beyond that were mostly left alone if they posed no threat.

As I detailed earlier, Mao’s China did quite well. Was strong enough to get an excellent deal from Richard Nixon and later from the World Trade Organisation, when it chose to open up. It did what the Soviet Union might have done and made a mess of doing.

“In the uncertain years after Mao’s death, long before China became an industrial juggernaut, before the Communist Party went on a winning

<sup>63</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord%27s\\_Prayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord%27s_Prayer). Also <https://web.archive.org/web/20131029201315/http://www.englishtexts.org/praying.pdf>, page 13.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/4f489c4c-e79e-11e8-8a85-04b8afea6ea3?emailId=5beef8d89afe30000421a991&segmentId=2e4343f6-b08f-9184-785d-0a53b99d57bf>.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/17/europe-britain-brexit-article-50-second-referendum>

<sup>66</sup> <https://gwydionmw.quora.com/Brexit-as-at-22nd-November-2018>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/world/asia/xi-jinping-speech-china.html>

streak that would reshape the world, a group of economics students gathered at a mountain retreat outside Shanghai. There, in the bamboo forests of Moganshan, the young scholars grappled with a pressing question: How could China catch up with the West?

"It was the autumn of 1984, and on the other side of the world, Ronald Reagan was promising 'morning again in America.' China, meanwhile, was just recovering from decades of political and economic turmoil. There had been progress in the countryside, but more than three-quarters of the population still lived in extreme poverty. The state decided where everyone worked, what every factory made and how much everything cost..."

"It was a remarkable act of reinvention, one that eluded the Soviets. In both China and the Soviet Union, vast Stalinist bureaucracies had smothered economic growth, with officials who wielded unchecked power resisting change that threatened their privileges."<sup>68</sup>

They don't say *China under Mao merely grew 300%*, which is what the best available figures show. If they had some alternative figures, presumably they would cite them. But it seems undisputed that Mao's China managed to match the average for the rest of the world, while being largely self-contained.

Clearly the wise commentators have decided that the public are not up to understanding off-message facts like that. The wise commentators try to relieve them of the horrible burden on thought. So far, they have managed this. Given the impression that Mao's China was an economic disaster, without lying by baldly saying it was so. They merely talk about definite errors like the Great Leap Forward, without balancing this against successes for most years. Never mention the large numbers of visitors who noticed how much China had improved from what it was before 1949.

Or they may write articles and even books about China without knowing the basics. Not being a mind-reader, I can only conclude that if they are honest, they are amazingly sloppy and prejudiced. And if competent, they are far from honest.

You do get a few claims that sound genuinely ignorant. People unaware that Mao's China always grew fast, while the Soviet Union increasingly stagnated from the 1960s:

**"Private Businesses Built Modern China. Now the Government Is Pushing Back..."**

**"China's leadership turned to entrepreneurs in the late 1970s, after the government had led the economy to the brink of collapse."<sup>69</sup>**

**"The Chinese economy has grown so fast for so long it is easy to forget how unlikely its metamorphosis into a global powerhouse was, and how much of its ascent was improvised and**

born of desperation.

"China now leads the world in the number of homeowners, internet users, college graduates and, by some counts, billionaires. Not so long ago, three-quarters of its population endured extreme poverty: Now it's less than 1 percent. An isolated, impoverished nation has evolved into the most significant rival to the United States since the fall of the Soviet Union."<sup>70</sup>

Had China stuck with the Cultural Revolution system, it would not have had the same run of very high growth-rates based on exports to foreign markets. But it would still have been matching average world growth-rates, and would have looked better when Japan stagnated and the East Asian Tigers had their 1997 crisis.

Or it might have dismantled the Cultural Revolution elements of popular rule, but kept it a country of Work Units. Or kept industry that way while liberalising agriculture.

The actual opening-up allowed much of the Party Machine to transform into a new and rich elite. Part of it was corrupt: a lot of it was legal. But ordinary people also got rich quite fast, and so it was tolerated. Still, those with the power never swallowed New Right ideas:

**"Forty years after Deng opened China, reformists are cowed..."**

**"Deng can take credit for a secular miracle: the greatest economic recovery in history.**

**"With cunning and pragmatism, Deng and his aides dismantled a broken economy and dystopian society left behind by Mao Zedong. They re-awoke the country's slumbering genius for capitalism and found a way to call it socialism, albeit 'with Chinese characteristics'. By 2004 the economy was 44 times larger than it was on December 18th 1978".<sup>71</sup>**

That's from *The Economist*. They show a graph of the size of the economy from 1960, rather than its rate of growth. That hides how much it was improving under Mao. And had they shown the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, it would have been clear that the pro-Western Kuomintang largely failed as a government of Mainland China, with growth only beginning after 1949.

They don't say '*the economy in 1978 was three times as large as it was in 1949*', which is what the best available figures show. And nor do they claim that the true figure was something else. The issue is evaded, and most readers do not notice.

Meantime, I'd suppose that the Chinese elite have got a good grasp of real history. Switching from the totally controlled economy to a version of the Mixed Economy did boost growth, though it also gave a much larger boost to the incomes of the elite. But if they damaged the economy with further privatisation, they'd be in trouble. There is already a small leftist opposition, which so far amounts to little. But small movements can grow, as they

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/18/world/asia/china-rules.html>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/03/business/china-economy-private-enterprise.html>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/25/business/dealbook/china-economy-business.html>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.economist.com/china/2018/12/08/forty-years-after-deng-opened-china-reformists-are-cowed>

know well.

The success of China's own version of the Mixed Economy – which can be accurately described while still treating Maoism as anathema – has been recognised by some of the conventional media:

"The Chinese thought they had little to learn from conventional wisdom. Now it's the West that's taking notes..."

"Milton Friedman had a message for China: To get rich, it must be free.

"It was 1988. The Soviet Union was tottering. Across Eastern Europe, the communist order was on the verge of collapsing. Trying to avoid its own demise, the Chinese Communist Party had taken small steps toward unshackling its economy from the state. But prices for food and other necessities were surging as a result, and the party's reformers wanted advice.

"They invited Mr. Friedman — the Nobel laureate and champion of economic freedom — to Zhongnanhai, the walled compound in Beijing where the country's most senior leaders live and work. Sitting down with Zhao Ziyang, the Communist Party's top leader, Mr. Friedman was tactful but insistent. If Beijing wants to help its people thrive, he said, the state must let go faster.

"I hope the Chinese people can become strong and prosperous," he told Mr. Zhao. "I wish to see China's reform succeed so that she can contribute more to the progress of mankind."

"To Mr. Friedman and other top economists, the strategy should have failed. Centrally planned economies breed waste and corruption. Big government ambitions cripple future generations with debt. Price controls lead to hunger and want. Official prognosticators invariably blow it. The Soviet Union proved that.

"Those experts were wrong. China prospered."<sup>72</sup>

"It has been eight years since China overtook Japan as the world's second-largest economy. Yet the Japanese government continued to provide China with development assistance usually reserved for poorer countries. Until now.

"In Beijing for the first official visit by a Japanese leader since 2011, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe acknowledged China's economic dominance by announcing an end to the aid. Instead, he pledged to forge deeper economic and political cooperation, in what is widely seen as a hedge against the volatile, America-first policies of President Trump.

"The announcement — coupled with new cooperation agreements Mr. Abe signed on Friday with his Chinese counterpart, Li Keqiang — signaled a significant shift in a relationship that has been haunted by war and occupation and is still strained by territorial disputes and other

issues, which, publicly at least, have receded into the background."<sup>73</sup>

## Cultural Skirmishes In China

In China, many rich people actually pay their share of taxes

"China's most famous actress, Fan Bingbing, has admitted to a multimillion-dollar tax evasion scheme as the state news media Wednesday warned others in the television and film industry to come clean or face a similar fate.

"The authorities fined Ms. Fan, 37, the equivalent of nearly \$70 million in unpaid taxes and penalties after an investigation found that she and employees of her production company had underreported her earnings from her blockbuster films — a practice that is said to be common in China, and not only in the entertainment industry.

"In her first public statement since dropping from public view four months ago, Ms. Fan offered a contrite apology and pledged to pay the fine to avoid a criminal investigation.

"The tax authorities in Beijing and Jiangsu, the province where her production company is based, said that since this was Ms. Fan's first offense, she would not face criminal charges as long as she and her company paid her fine and an additional \$60 million in back taxes owed by her company..."

"Shortly after the inquiry began in June, the government announced that it would impose new limits on the salaries of actors, even in privately financed films. No one actor can now earn more than 70 percent of what the entire cast makes or more than 40 percent of production costs of a movie. The statement said the industry was 'distorting social values' and 'fostering money worship tendencies' with outsize compensation."<sup>74</sup>

An enormously rich woman felt she should not be burdened with anyone else's needs. But there is now less tolerance of such things. Wisely, she has now backed down. One would like to think she had learned human sympathy, but more likely it is fear of state power:

"Although Fan was paid 30 million yuan for her role in the film *Unbreakable Spirit*, she only declared 10 million yuan, while the other 20 million yuan was left out of her contract, thus evading 7.3 million yuan in taxes, according to an investigation conducted by the State Administration of Taxation and the Jiangsu Provincial Tax Service, the Xinhua News Agency reported on Wednesday.

"Fan and her companies also owe 248 million yuan in taxes, the report said."<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/25/world/asia/china-economy-strategy.html>

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/26/world/asia/shinzo-abe-china-japan.html>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/02/world/asia/fan-bingbing-tax-evasion-china.html>

<sup>75</sup> Currently there are about nine yuan to the pound.

"Authorities has ordered Fan to pay the said taxes, an overdue fee of 33 million yuan and a fine of 596 million yuan based on relevant laws and regulations, Xinhua reported.

"Fan will have to pay about 884 million yuan by a deadline, according to the Xinhua report. However, the exact date was not mentioned.

"If Fan meets the deadline, she will not face criminal charges. Otherwise, authorities will turn her over to public security authorities for further investigation, Xinhua reported.

"Fan's agent, surnamed Mou, was accused of hiding and destroying accounting books when tax authorities conducted an investigation in June. Mou has been taken into custody for further questioning, the report said.

"Local taxation authorities are also being investigated for not fulfilling their duty, it said.

"Further supervision over the film and television industry has already begun. People in the industry who voluntarily settle their taxes by December 31 will not face penalties or fines, the report said.

"The taxation authorities' investigation came after Cui Yongyuan, an outspoken former TV host, claimed in May that Fan was involved in tax fraud."<sup>76</sup>

China is increasingly asserting its own values. It has taken what it needed from the West, and does not need to mindlessly copy the rest:

"The authorities in Langfang, a city in China's Hebei Province, have issued a ban on all Christmas displays on streets and in stores, according to a notice from city officials.

"Christmas may be a Western holiday, but it has been co-opted in China as a marketing opportunity, with glittering trees towering in malls to draw in shoppers.

"In Langfang, however, city authorities have vowed to clear out all Christmas lights and decorations from its streets, stores and schools. The notice ordered employees to do a sweep of shopping malls and streets on Dec. 23, 24 and 25 to make sure there are no Christmas decorations.

"The three days are not public holidays in China, and the order comes amid an intensifying crackdown on foreign-influenced religious activity."<sup>77</sup>

A re-assertion of solid values, at a time when the West is evasive on the matter:

"In China, censorship isn't just limited to critiques of the government. It also includes what the ruling party considers moral rot. Underage drinking, drug use, violence, and hyper-sexualized content get scrubbed from media and film. This top-down social engineering finds its shape in the country's

new social-credit system, which punishes undesirable behavior like canceling dinner reservations or jaywalking by restricting travel rights or access to (financial) credit.

"Far from feeling threatened by this development, ordinary Chinese seem to actually welcome it. A 2017 Ipsos poll revealed that 47 percent of the population regards moral decline as the country's biggest threat and an astonishing 87 percent believe the country to be heading in the right direction. According to the same poll, only 43 percent of Americans feel their country is heading in the right direction, and most would argue we are undergoing a moral reckoning. (It is important to note that a cross-national comparison of survey results is complicated by China's punitive monitoring of criticism.)"<sup>78</sup>

Most of the Chinese public are not bothered by what happens to those who break the rules:

"When a resident of Anxi village in China's southwest Sichuan province set fire to a pile of rubbish two years ago, a loudspeaker barked his name and ordered him to put the blaze out. He extinguished the flames and scuttled away...

"He had been caught on a surveillance camera, monitored around the clock on one of 16 screens in the village security control room.

"Everyone knew who the culprit was, so he would never dare to do that again,' said the local Communist Party secretary, Yin Xiuqin, 55.

"The surveillance video in Anxi is also broadcast to cellphones and some televisions – placing busybodies on the front line of local security.

"People know they are always being watched. Fear of shaming is the essence of Sharp Eyes – or Xue Liang – a project being tested in 50 towns as part of what will become a nationwide system."<sup>79</sup>

Someone should do a survey of how British people would feel about having such a system in Britain. Intellectuals panic, but what would ordinary people think? Would the feel threatened or defended by reliable person-spotting cameras in public places?

Note also that they do nothing that human 'spotters' do not already do. I heard of a case in which an innocent who got listed as a security risk because they were seen in the company of someone else who was wrongly identified as a wanted terrorist.

Intellectuals have kept the 1960s attitude, when they really were 'up against the state', though rather less than they thought. They also got a glamorised vision of criminals of liberators – I'd say that very few are. Possibly none at all, but I'll stick to 'very few' just in case someone might get personal about it. With certainty, actual criminals have a deep distrust of almost all other criminals, mostly including those they work with.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1121669.shtml>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/world/asia/china-christmas-display-ban.html> ?

<sup>78</sup> <https://arcdigital.media/china-is-building-a-social-credit-system-so-is-the-united-states-a9facbc6f832>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/2170834/chinas-sharp-eyes-surveillance-system-puts-security-focus-public>

Hippy attitudes in the 1980s commonly transformed into the ‘Coolheart’ view – ‘*it’s a game that we play, and I just play and I don’t make the rules*’.<sup>80</sup> Also a view that ‘may the best man win’ – that was in the days before women were supposed to compete. But the best result does come from a competition to find ‘the best man’ or even ‘the best person’. And Dawkins’s talk of ‘the selfish gene’ is also nonsense – genes are not selfish, any more than thunderstorms are angry or sandbanks are treacherous.

Natural Selection produced humans, but in a very slow and messy process. To me, that says that there was no intelligence around to direct it – ‘intelligent design’ is even sillier than Creationism, because so many of the designs are bad. One simple instance – human childbirth is tricky, because Natural Selection favoured children born with slightly larger brains even if it made birth unusually tough for human females. Human babies also have a lot of brain-growth *after* birth, and an Intelligent Design would be babies born with relatively small heads who do a lot of head-growth afterwards. But since Natural Selection favours the more successful individuals, it struck a balance between killing the mother and having a slightly smarter boy or girl who will leave behind more descendants.

Nature is not humane. But humans care for each other more than chimps care for other chimps. Lizards mostly care nothing for other lizards, and might even eat other members of their own species. So I see caring as one of the things that made us a success.

It is true that private commerce can generate interesting ideas that a planned system might have rejected as too novel or too likely to fail. But that is a justification for a Mixed Economy – the core functions are state-run, but other stuff is allowed so long as it is nothing criminal.

China is doing well with such a system. But is still at risk from pro-Western dissidents: people with the same twisted New Right outlook that is currently crippling the West. The West is still much richer, so that the New Right folly can be mistaken for wisdom.

Chinese dissidents do not understand world politics, so they think Chinese politics is freakish and abnormal. It is actually unusual only to the degree in which the wishes of most people have been met.

China still has what the West had in the 1950s and 1960s. It has a state committed to looking after those who need it:

“Typically, more than half of the cost of the bus is subsidised by government,’ says Ma. ‘In terms of operation there is another subsidy: if we run our buses for a distance of more than 60,000km we receive just under 500,000 yuan [£58,000] from local government.’ This subsidy is put towards reducing the cost of the bus fares: ‘The government looks at the public transport very much as social welfare.’”<sup>81</sup>

This is also an updated version of the values of the 1950s and 1960s. Then, the dream was of everyone

having a personal flying-car and living in a tower block. And still assumed that most women would stay in subordinate roles. China is imperfect on those grounds, but moving in the right direction.

## China Shaken From the Left?

“Scholars at Cornell’s Industrial and Labor Relations School said they were suspending a 6-year-old research and exchange program with Renmin University in Beijing after the school punished at least a dozen students who joined a nationwide call for better protections for low-income workers in China.

“The student activists, who describe themselves as followers of Mao and Marx, say they are fighting to defend the working class and the legacy of communism.

“The governing Communist Party, which sees mass movements as a threat, has detained dozens of activists and ordered universities, including Renmin, to help suppress what has become one of the most tenacious student protests in China in years.”<sup>82</sup>

“The activists, describing themselves as ardent communists who fervently believe in the ideals of Marx and Mao, have waged an unusual campaign against inequality and corporate greed that has gained traction at some of China’s top schools.”<sup>83</sup>

That’s from the *New York Times*, which is not a paper noted for even lukewarm belief in the ideas of Karl Marx, let alone Chairman Mao. So the Chinese students should wonder what they are doing wrong, to have such friends.

The Germans in World War Two let Lenin cross Germany to get to Russia, not because they wanted a Marxist revolution, but because they hoped he’d take Russia out of the war, as indeed he did. Likewise the USA encouraged Islamic extremists in Afghanistan, to defeat a pro-Soviet regime and to weaken Soviet power in general. Those two were notable ‘blowbacks’, in which the sponsored forces became much more dangerous foes. But more often it works.

I’ve not so far been able to get an independent source on just what the students were demanding. But if they were trying to undermine Party power, they were foolish. Much better to work with it, in the hope of continuing the leftward drift.

Since he also still faced strong pro-Western forces within China, President Xi may be looking to the past to justify his Middle Road:

“President Xi Jinping pledged on Friday to learn from the high morality of the late leader Liu Shaoqi to have firm belief in communism and always be loyal to the Party and the people.

“Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman

<sup>80</sup> I have a definite memory of these words being part of a pop song, but several attempts to find it via Google failed to locate anything that seemed similar.

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/dec/12/silence-shenzhen-world-first-electric-bus-fleet>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/29/world/asia/cornell-university-renmin.html>

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/11/world/asia/china-student-activists.html>

of the Central Military Commission, made the remark while delivering a speech at a symposium at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Liu's birth.

"Liu, a veteran revolutionary leader, joined the CPC in 1921 and served as Chinese president from 1959 to 1968. He was expelled from the Party in 1968 during the 'cultural revolution' (1966-76) and died a year later at the age of 71."<sup>84</sup>

"We are gathered here with deep respect to commemorate the 120th birth anniversary of Comrade Liu Shaoqi... and to remember his tireless endeavors to pursue national independence and liberation of the people, a stronger and more prosperous country, and the people's happiness,' Xi said.

"Calling Liu a great Marxist, a great proletarian revolutionary, a great statesman, and a great theorist, Xi said Liu was one of the major Party and state leaders, one of the founders of the People's Republic of China and an integral member of the first-generation central leadership of the CPC.

"Liu worked tirelessly for the country's revolutionary undertakings and its development, and was held in high esteem among the whole Party, the entire military and people of all ethnic groups, Xi said.

"Liu, with noble character, has been and will always be a role model for the CPC members and the Chinese people, Xi noted."<sup>85</sup>

Liu and Deng also stuck to Party discipline when Mao was against them, just as Mao had much earlier when the then-leaders of the Party displaced him before the Long March. They played by the rules and in time got to make those rules. It is an approach that pays off in the long run.

Another example. Xi Jinping's father Xi Zhongxun was purged by Mao and rehabilitated along with Deng. Later purged again when he supported the liberal Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang in the year before the 1989 Tiananmen protests. Played by the rules and now his son is Top Man. And by his recent policies, perhaps accepting that his father was wrong to support Hu Yaobang, who might have taken Westernisation much too far.

## DNA Privacy

"On Halloween night in 1996, a man in a skeleton mask knocked on the door of a house in Martinez, California, handcuffed the woman who greeted him and raped her. Two weeks later, he called the dental office where she worked. Investigators tried to track him down through phone records, but got nowhere. They obtained traces of his semen, but there was no match for his DNA in any criminal

database.

"Last month—two decades after the crime—the Sacramento district attorney's office tried something new to finally crack the case of this serial rapist, who had attacked at least 10 women in their homes. Investigators converted the assailant's DNA to the kind of profile that family history websites such as 23andMe are built on, and uploaded it to GEDmatch.com, a free site open to all and beloved by genealogical researchers seeking to find biological relatives or to construct elaborate family trees..."

"Some genealogists find that notion profoundly problematic, given the many ethical and privacy issues that have emerged as investigators have come to rely on a privately owned family history site to solve crimes."<sup>86</sup>

It seems a lot of people worry.<sup>87</sup> Myself, I think 'why should I worry?' It only applies to rapists and murderers. I'd not planned to do either, and if I did I would deserve to be caught. But my DNA is anyway on file, by my own choice, and shows I have much larger heritage from Europe's early hunter-gatherers than most Europeans.<sup>88</sup> The governments already snoops on me, probably illegally. Maybe also the CIA or various Agencies With No Name. It's not ideal, but what would really offend would be if I were being ignored.

As a large but elderly male, I am an unlikely target for rape, but do need to worry about theft and violence. Yet anyone *might* be raped, even if young women are the main targets. And I see the needs of others, much more at risk than I am.

If snooping governments are a possible threat to privacy, aggressive criminals are much more so.

## Dangerous Drugs Get Everywhere

"The sale of so-called legal highs has gone underground after a blanket ban came into force, a report says.

"While the ban has led to a 'considerable reduction' in use of the drugs, street dealers are now the main source of supply.

"Now officially known as new psychoactive substances (NPS), they mimic the effects of other drugs like cocaine, cannabis and ecstasy.

"They were sold openly, mainly in specialist shops, before May 2016.

"Since the Psychoactive Substances Act (PSA) came in, they are no longer being sold in the stores, known as head shops, according to the Home Office review.

"They said 31 outlets had closed, with a further 332 no longer stocking the drugs. Prices have gone up too and 'significantly' fewer people are

<sup>84</sup>

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201811/24/WS5bf88740a310eff30328ac72.html>

<sup>85</sup> [http://www.china.org.cn/china/2018-11/24/content\\_74204578.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/2018-11/24/content_74204578.htm)

<sup>86</sup> <https://medium.com/the-new-york-times/how-an-unlikely-family-history-website-transformed-cold-case-investigations-79adad9d9e9e>

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/10/12/17957268/science-ancestry-dna-privacy>

<sup>88</sup> <https://gwydionmadawc.com/about/my-dna-results/>

using them.”<sup>89</sup>

People tend to think that if they or a friend have taken some psychoactive substance once without obvious damage, it must be safe. They ignore personal differences and long-term effects:

“Growing numbers of middle-aged and older people are ending up in hospital suffering serious mental health problems after taking drugs, new NHS statistics reveal.

“The number of people in England aged 45 and above admitted with a drug-related mental and behavioural disorder has soared 85% over the last decade.

“They have been treated after displaying symptoms such as hallucinations, confusion, extreme agitation and disinhibition.

“Similarly, there has also been an increase of 32% in admissions for poisoning as a result of drug misuse in those aged 55 and above over the last six years.”<sup>90</sup>

## Good News From Russia

“Russia has emerged as an agricultural powerhouse

“Enterprising farmers have overcome the legacy of Soviet collectivisation...

“Russian agriculture, a booming sector in an otherwise sluggish economy. Production has increased by more than 20% in the past five years, despite a broader recession and now stagnation. ‘That’s what’s called a breakthrough,’ President Vladimir Putin gushed as he discussed the upbeat figures at a recent meeting with farmers. Export revenues from agriculture—which reached over \$20bn in 2017—now exceed those from typically strong earners such as armament sales. Grain has been the star. In 2016 Russia became the world’s leading exporter of wheat for the first time since before the Russian revolution... Grain is our second oil,’ said Aleksandr Tkachev, the agriculture minister at the time...

“Tsarist-era Russia was a big agricultural exporter, but Bolshevik collectivisation wiped out farming traditions and created an inefficient collective system that by the 1970s left the Soviet Union importing grain and other foodstuffs.

“Bans on agricultural imports from Western countries have also cleared space for local producers, though at the cost of higher inflation. Although Russia still imports more food than it exports, steps have been made towards the government’s goals of feeding itself: in the past five years, for example, Russia has become self-sufficient in pork and poultry...

“Rising temperatures and improving technologies mean longer growing seasons, higher crop yields

and wider swathes of arable land in much of Russia.”<sup>91</sup>

The supposed doom from socialism was the failure of the Soviet Union in the 1970s. It had been efficient before that, but botched a series of reforms. Hung on to what was effectively a Russian colonial empire, long after other Colonial Empires had been dissolved.

In China, the land is still state-owned, but farmers work it individually. Something like this might have succeeded in the Soviet Union, if they had been wise enough to try.

Less good is that Russia shows minimal interest in curbing Climate Change, since they seem likely to be net gainers. They are used to extremes of weather, and might ride out the crisis quite nicely. Possibly ending up selling grain to a hungry USA.

## Bulgaria Suffers

“Bulgaria has the lowest average salary in the EU (€575), the lowest minimum wage (€260) and the smallest average pension (€190).

“The upshot is that more than 40 per cent of Bulgarians are now at risk of poverty and social exclusion – twice the proportion of Germans who find themselves in the same predicament.

“In addition, while on average the top one-fifth of people in EU states earn 5.2 times more than the bottom one-fifth, in Bulgaria the haves make more than eight times more than the have-nots – without accounting for undeclared wealth...

“The economy is growing at around 3.5 per cent, but the World Bank says it needs to expand ‘by at least 4 per cent per year over the next 25 years for Bulgaria to catch up with average EU income levels and thus boost shared prosperity’.

“Bulgaria leads the EU when it comes to one unpalatable indicator – the prevalence of corruption, and graft is draining the economy, scaring away foreign investors and serving to keep people poor...

“The UN says Bulgaria is actually the world’s fastest shrinking nation, with its current population of about 7 million people expected to dwindle to 5.4 million by 2050 and 3.9 million by the end of the century.

“Bulgaria has already lost almost 2 million people from a peak of nearly 9 million in 1989, revealing the massive and long-term impact of the transition from communism to capitalism on eastern Europe - where eight other countries are also expected to suffer a population decline of more than 15 per cent by 2050.”<sup>92</sup>

That’s the drawback to the European Union. People move towards the richer core, and outlying areas suffer.

The same thing happened on a smaller scale for the British Isles, with everything draining to the centre and

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-46269726>

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/dec/02/nhs-sees-spike-in-amount-of-older-people-admitted-to-hospital-with-drugs-side-effects>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2018/12/01/russia-has-emerged-as-an-agricultural-powerhouse>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/welcome-to-bulgaria-the-world-s-fastest-shrinking-nation-1.3658819>

especially London.<sup>93</sup> Ireland never recovered the population it had before the Potato Famine – it grew more than enough food to feed the eight million or more that it then had, but the British state sent troops to ensure that crops other than potatoes were taken for export.<sup>94</sup> Less drastic things happened in Wales and Scotland, but both include regions that have lost population since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## The Self-Wounding USA

“Capitalism Ripped Through America Like a Bomb Instead of Regulating Itself. What Does That Tell Us?...

“America’s strange [1980s] experiment tested the following hypothesis. If we left capitalism to its own devices—if we unmade all the rules that reined it in, and took away all the regulations that held it to account we could imaginably get away with—it would ‘regulate itself.’ That is, the magical utopia of the classical French laissez-faire economists would finally emerge—or the darker one of the modern American libertarian. Competition would make sure that no one built a monopoly—and something like a wonderland of noble, virtuous capitalists, serving society like kind and gentle helpers would emerge.”<sup>95</sup>

As I said earlier, the serious attempt to be Libertarian was dropped as early as 1987. But the creed remained useful as a cover for running a Mixed Economy in the interests of a tiny more-than-millionaire class. For dropping any duty of care:

“When I began teaching management to M.B.A. students in 1971, a major company goal was customer satisfaction through outstanding employee performance. Great emphasis was placed on employee motivation, performance and loyalty to the company to maximize customer satisfaction. Frederick Herzberg’s theory of ‘job enrichment’ and Abraham Maslow’s ‘self-actualization’ were introduced to students as methods to add meaning and challenge to jobs and to stress employment achievement.

“Then in the mid-1980s the emphasis shifted to shareholder value, and many employers began to view employees as commodities to be bought and sold. The profits and stock prices in quarterly and annual reports became the holy grail of organizational effectiveness. Pensions disappeared, employee loyalty declined, and the result has been an unfortunate decline of the American employee.”<sup>96</sup>

## Do Banks Make Money?

Money is a set of agreed social values. It wasn’t ‘real’ when it was mostly gold and silver, because these are of no great use to anyone. Still, you can be sure that someone will want your silver or gold and will trade for it, whereas paper money may become worthless.

But a lot of money is now based on credit. And credit hinges on banks. So do banks just invent money?

If they did, how is it possible that banks ‘run out of money’?

I can’t accept the story that banks invent money. They can create it, but only to their limit of credit. My view is

1. The world as a whole cannot be consuming more goods and services than it actually produced.
2. Money will not be trusted if it gets much out of line on this. A mismatch is a classic bubble.
3. Spending more *might* boost production, or get more service workers hired. But this is variable.
4. Banks ‘create money’, only in as far as they offer either credit or loans. And can only do this for as long as they have suitable assets.
5. Banks can get away with ‘fractional reserve banking’, lending far more than they own, only on the assumption that a national government is there able to bail them out if necessary.
6. When the government is not trusted to look after creditors, the currency will not be trusted. Trust is what makes ‘hard currency’.

Independent currencies like Bitcoin have value, firstly because they can be used by criminals without those criminals needing to trust each other more than the criminal minimal norm. And secondarily because they have repeatedly been useful for pump-and-dump, with ‘investors’ failing to notice that big rises get followed by equally drastic falls.<sup>97</sup>

Banks can indeed run out of money – people stop believing that their payments can be treated as real money. They obviously would not have ‘cash on the nail’ for most transactions, quite apart from the problem of physically paying for them. No one except criminals would have suit-cases of notes, though of course Bitcoin has partly

## Make America Slim Again?

That would be a good slogan for whoever gets the 2020 Democratic nomination for President. Because the mess-ups in US society have pushed more and more individuals into over-eating and gross over-weight.

There is a lot of politics in it:

“Where ‘Yes! To Affordable Groceries’ Really Means No to a Soda Tax

“Standing in a supermarket produce aisle, her face shadowed with dread, the middle-aged

<sup>93</sup> <https://gwydionwilliams.com/40-britain/how-the-british-empire-blighted-britain/>

<sup>94</sup> *Economical With The Irish*, <https://gwydionwilliams.com/50-new-right-ideas/430-2/>

<sup>95</sup> <https://eand.co/the-fantasy-of-capitalist-utopia-4d7e570ec265>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/29/opinion/letters/company-profits.html>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-46263998>

woman speaks directly to the camera and makes a plea for common decency.

"We should not be taxed on what we eat," she says in a commercial that is being broadcast across Washington State. "We need to eat to survive, and if we have to cut back on what we eat, that's not going to be good — especially for the elderly."

"In the run-up to Election Day, residents of Washington and Oregon have been bombarded with similar messages from groups with names like Yes! To Affordable Groceries. The organizations have spent more than \$25 million on commercials that feature plain-spoken farmers and penny-pinching moms urging support of ballot measures that would prohibit municipalities from taxing food sales.

"But what most voters don't know is that Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and other American beverage companies are largely financing the initiatives — not to block taxes on staples like milk and vegetables but to choke off a growing movement to tax sugary drinks.

"At a time of soaring childhood obesity, and with more than one in three adults overweight, health advocates say that soda taxes are an effective way to dampen consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. Nearly 40 countries now have them, along with seven cities in the United States, including Philadelphia, San Francisco and Boulder, Colo."<sup>98</sup>

Modern business has learnt how to abuse democratic processes.

It is time to drop populist nonsense. No, the public do not have instant understanding of the very complex issues they get to decide on. So 'direct democracy' very easily becomes a tool for the rich and unscrupulous.

Campaign on the slogan **Make America Slim Again** – suitable for all the Democratic contenders I have seen, and correctly mocking Mr Trump.

The public should say what they want, and trust to politicians and the state to deliver it. Political parties are needed to meet actual human needs. When there are several competent parties that can be swapped and replaced, fine. But when there is only one, it is risky to tinker with this.

## A new view of Bush Senior

In the December Newsnotes, I explained why Bush Senior was not the nice fellow that the Western press made him out to be.

Now there is more – a remarkable account from US journalist Seymour M. Hersh claims that he actually ran things. That Reagan was just an amiable front-man:

"When George H.W. Bush arrived in Washington as vice president in January 1981 he seemed little more than a sideshow to Ronald Reagan,

the one-time leading man who had been overwhelmingly elected to the greatest stage in the world...

"There was another view of Bush: the one held by the military men and civilian professionals who worked for him on national security issues. Unlike the president, he knew what was going on and how to get things done. For them, Reagan was 'a dimwit' who didn't get it, or even try to get it. A former senior official of the Office of Management and Budget described the president to me as 'lazy, just lazy'. Reagan, the official explained, insisted on being presented with a three-line summary of significant budget decisions, and the OMB concluded that the easiest way to cope was to present him with three figures – one very high, one very low and one in the middle, which Reagan invariably signed off on..."

"A former military officer who worked closely with Moreau recalled the early tensions that prompted Bush to increase the targeting of Soviet operations. Moreau's actions were aimed at limiting Soviet influence without provoking a confrontation. 'We saw the Russians sorting out their internal politics and expanding economically,' the officer recalled. 'Its military had become much more competent, with advances in technology, nuclear engineering and in space. They were feeling good about their planned economy and believed that their state control of education from cradle to grave was working, and it seemed as if the Russians were expanding everywhere. We were in descent; our post-Vietnam army was in shambles; morale was at rock bottom, and the American people had an anti-militarist attitude. There was a sense of general weakness, and the Russians were taking advantage of it. They had developed the MIRV – the multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle, a missile carrying several nuclear warheads – and were putting ICBMs on wheels and hardening nuclear silos. This was at the time when it became clear that the president was drifting, and was not an effective leader.'..."

"Nobody on the Joint Chiefs of Staff ever believed we were going to build Star Wars,' the officer said, 'but if we could convince the Russians that we could survive a first strike, we win the game.' The aim of the game was to find a way to change the nuclear status quo of Mutual Assured Destruction, or seem to do so. 'We wanted the Russians to believe that we had removed the M from MAD.'"<sup>99</sup>

## British Labour Choices

Enormous noise has been made about Russians, and now also Chinese, supposedly abusing social media to influence Western governments.

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/health/grocery-taxes-oregon-washington-soda-tax.html>

<sup>99</sup> *The Vice President's Men*,  
<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v41/n02/seymour-m-hersh/the-vice-presidents-men>

Hardly anything about Western governments doing the same in foreign countries. No one wants to look at evidence that various Foundations and supposed Charities financed by rich people in the West helped produce Civil War in Former Yugoslavia and Ukraine. Or tried hard to do the same in Russia and China.

Or even using public money to attack their own opposition parties:

"The Foreign Office minister, Alan Duncan, has ordered an investigation into reports the government provided funding to a Scottish-based company meant to counter online Russian propaganda, which also spread unfavourable views about Jeremy Corbyn.

"The Institute for Statecraft, based in Fife, received hundreds of thousands of pounds in Foreign Office money.

"According to the Sunday Mail, leaked documents show it tried to promote tweets calling the Labour leader a 'useful idiot' who helped the Kremlin cause, and attacked members of his staff."<sup>100</sup>

That's apart from all of the bias that the rich and right-wing can pay for, mostly legally. A recent BBC dramatization showed a US expert boosting Brexit with phony claims of more money for the NHS. If some details were invented, this is pretty much what happened.

Meantime Corbyn remains lukewarm about a second Referendum, and perhaps not unhappy for Britain to be leaving. Other European socialists are trying to win him round:

"Jeremy Corbyn, your fellow European socialists need you in the EU

"In an open letter, we ask you to do all you can to stop Brexit – and spearhead the movement for progressive change in Europe...

"The left is resurgent across Europe; each of us sees this in our own movements, and in one another's. Your Labour party, the breadth of its vision, the passion of its language, the strength of its membership, has brought inspiration and optimism to us all. Which we need, for the picture is not at all rosy. Fascism is on the rise within Europe, buoyed and supported, implicitly and explicitly, by an invigorated authoritarianism without. Corporate interests prevail, unchecked by a post-ideological politics which has exhausted itself. Climate change becomes climate crisis, and those who deny it become ever more forceful..."

"We all have deep misgivings about the dominant institutions of the European Union, and what they have become over the past three decades. The contagious creed of austerity has spread through its airways. The interests of capital and global corporations have come to take precedence over those of citizens..."

"Yet we are not ready to surrender this once great project to those who would subvert it. To do

so would betray its creators, whose values we cherish. More importantly, it would leave us weakened when we most need our strength, and isolated when we most need our solidarity. There is no answer to any of these questions that is not transnational. There is no way that our frustrated fellow citizens will feel represented unless they can be heard at European and global levels.

"We need you in the EU. Nobody understands better what it takes – from the law, from the union movement, from activism – to bring to life and fruition the ambitions and dreams of every citizen. We need you, as you can become a catalyst for a different Europe, providing new and necessary momentum for true progressive change. We need one another, just as we needed one another at the inception of the EU, to meet the most urgent challenges mankind can ever face: to avoid war; to foster equality; to cooperate in the face of threats to our planet; to harness solidarity that it might achieve the most of which it is capable."<sup>101</sup>

## Netflix: At Last, Commercial Television

Finally we have authentic Commercial Television, driven by viewers rather than advertising.

Broadcast radio could be picked up by anyone with a receiver. Likewise television. So either it was state-funded, or it got its money by selling advertising. Either direct plugs, or persuading companies that they could win prestige by sponsoring a program. The term 'soap opera' originated from radio dramas sponsored by soap manufacturers in the USA,<sup>102</sup> though it has now become a generic term for any on-going drama serial.

Cable television can be charged for, but mostly carries existing channels, generally funded by advertising. It widened the choice, but did not make a huge difference to contents.

*Streaming media* are something else. Technically they are multimedia that are constantly received by and presented to an end-user while being delivered by a provider.<sup>103</sup> The material can be delivered either via the internet or as part of a cable television service. It is not like a download, where the user receives the entire file on their machine and might easily pirate it. Also different from a broadcast, which starts at a particular time and requires you to either watch then or make special arrangements to record it. For streaming, you will always be downloading the next portion of your program, and soon lose whatever you have just watched.

I became a Netflix user because I badly wanted to see *Star Trek: Discovery* ahead of its eventual release on disc. Had to rig up a very long cable from my Internet modem to the television, which was in a different room, and found it worth the effort.

Even better when I got a new television and found that it

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/dec/10/jeremy-corbyn-europe-socialists-brexit>

<sup>102</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soap\\_opera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soap_opera)

<sup>103</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming\\_media](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming_media)

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/dec/10/foreign-office-investigates-report-state-funded-body-targeted-corbyn>

could access Netflix via my Sky cable service. And I am just one of many:

"The number of both US and international subscribers grew at a clip over the month, with Netflix adding 1.09 million new subscribers in the US and 5.87 million internationally. The company anticipates adding another 9.4 million subscribers during the fourth quarter, up 13% compared with the 8.3 million it added a year ago."<sup>104</sup>

Being kept alive by subscribers, Netflix has more reason to support programs with a small fan-base. For instance a series called *The Last Kingdom*, set in Saxon England, is staying alive there. And it had an independent success with a silly but highly gripping and entertaining film called *Bird Box*, which can only be seen there.

What's irritating is that there are now several rival streaming services. More money taken from customers, but less actual customer choice.

## Negotiating With Necessity

"Philosopher Peter Carruthers insists that conscious thought, judgment and volition are illusions. They arise from processes of which we are forever unaware."<sup>105</sup>

That's from *Scientific American*. But if he's correct, then he isn't doing it. The article ought to say:

*"A view that we are illusory arose spontaneously in the vicinity of an entity known as Peter Carruthers. Who is however a non-thinking entity within which ideas occur for some utterly mysterious reason. As indeed is the author of this article."*

These philosophers often strike dramatic attitudes, and fail to think matters through.

To me, it is utterly absurd that we could suppose that we think and can manage a 'negotiation with necessity', but are mistaken. Why should we even suppose it? Why should Natural Selection give us a large brain that we do not actually use?

I see it as confusion based on the solid fact that outside influences do have an *influence* on our thinking. This leads to delusions that human thoughts

I was interested enough to do a complete study, *The Muon and the Green Great Dragon*, showing how this wasn't correct.<sup>106</sup> Aspects of sub-atomic physics suggest that the observer partly creates what they see: but not that they control it. There are other ways to see it. And muons are sub-atomic particles that defied everyone's expectations, but were real.

Humans can be manipulated, certainly. Films at one time used subliminal advertising that showed a picture of an ice cream, say, and induced the viewers to buy more ice cream than they would otherwise had bought. But that is a matter of persuasion, just as a soft-sell salesman may trick

a customer into buying something they would otherwise not have bought.

Ages ago, I heard one example in a radio documentary. While trying to sell a car, the matter arose of putting the new owner's name on it. The salesman – all men in those days – pretended to get unreasonable and bullying about the style of lettering. This aroused the customer's feeling that it was *his* car and he had to assert his control of it, which he was allowed to do. He meantime lost sight of any doubts about actually buying that particular car. His territorial instinct was successfully played on.

Human wills get bent by all sorts of means. I mentioned earlier my suspicions that exciting car chases without innocents hurt feed into New Right attitude. Do so whether or not the film maker had an agenda beyond getting an audience, but I suspect many do. Likewise the common hyping of independent operatives or mavericks who break all the rules, rather than the older pattern of people trying to be decent within some larger organisation with broadly good intentions. *Star Trek to Star Wars* is a symptom of the wider process.

Picking on untypical cases might seem too crude a method to control people, but in fact it does work. It works even for the primitive Artificial Intelligences we are developing. One such was left free to draw conclusions from factual data it was fed, with no preconceptions given. And one conclusion it reached was '**most people are famous**'.<sup>107</sup>

No one could literally believe that most people are famous. But Andy Warhol made a big impact by the ludicrous suggestion "*in the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes*". It hides the awkward fact that genuine fame must of necessity be rare, and should not be the basis for people's hopes and dreams.

It also ignores the immense mental suffering of those who were once famous and are later forgotten. US culture is much more prone than most to discard people that way.

But all cultures involve some element of fooling people. Being fooled is part of having a will of your own. It can always be bent, tricked or openly overridden. And this is part of the New Right package, within which the idea that we do not really choose or think is part of it.

Consistent with Adam Smith's strange claim that an Invisible Hand guides us to do the right thing if we just look to self-interest and do not worry about trying to make a better world.<sup>108</sup>

The Theory of No Intelligence?

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/oct/16/netflix-shares-new-members-report>

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/there-is-no-such-thing-as-conscious-thought/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://gwydionwilliams.com/99-problems-magazine/in-a-hole-in-a-hole-dwelt-a-nothingness/>

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/emerging-technologies-semantic-work-environments/10149>

<sup>108</sup> See *Adam Smith and the New Right*, <https://gwydionwilliams.com/48-economics/2434-2/>

## Snippets

### Boris the Blunderer

"Three unusable water cannon bought by Boris Johnson when he was mayor of London have been sold for scrap, at a net loss of more than £300,000.

"Johnson bought the crowd-control vehicles from the German police in 2014, in anticipation of social unrest, without checking whether they could be used on London's streets. In one of his most humiliating episodes as mayor, the then home secretary, Theresa May, banned them from use anywhere in England and Wales. It left the capital's taxpayers with three expensive white elephants."<sup>109</sup>

### Fractured Bosnia

The war is over, but the society has never been put back together again:

"Each day, children stream into the same school building, only to study separately, using separate textbooks, while learning in different languages. The ethnic Croatians from the suburbs are taught in the right side of the building. They are mostly Roman Catholics. The Bosnian Muslim students who live mostly in the city are taught in the left side.

"For many of the students, the split is an unwanted relic of Bosnia's ethnic wars of the 1990s among Serbs, Croats and Muslims."<sup>110</sup>

This happened after that fragment of Former Yugoslavia. They had followed Western advice and tried multi-party politics. Yugoslav Communism had kept the peace in an area of traditional ethnic conflict. But elections favoured sectarian parties that each persuaded their own ethnic group that they were being treated very unfairly.

The power of a larger state, the European Union, has now calmed matters. But actually curing it will take much longer.

### A disgrace for Britain

'This is supposed to be a rich country' commented one volunteer for Britain's food banks.<sup>111</sup>

Britain remains a rich country, but a vast unearned slice of extra wealth has gone to a small elite. And young people often have a resigned and hopeless view of it:

"Many young adults expected to be worse off than previous generations and believed opportunities depended on social background rather than talent."<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/nov/19/boris-johnson-unused-water-cannon-sold-for-scrap-at-300000-loss>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/01/world/europe/bosnia-schools-segregated-ethnic.html>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/dec/19/this-is-supposed-to-be-a-rich-country-volunteers-on-the-reality-of-food-bank-britain>

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-46507523>

Meantime the supposed economic benefits of New Right policies are imaginary:

"Britain's stalled economy will fall back in the international rankings next year to sit in seventh place behind India and France, according to a report by consultants at PwC."<sup>113</sup>

### Captain Cook – Selectively Humane

I'd always understood that Captain Cook was an admirable example of humanity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when most captains treated their crews very badly.

He was indeed humane to other Europeans. Sadly, not to the natives, whom he was intending to deliver as raw material to the expanding British Empire. Or maybe just take their land, which was suitable for European settlement:

"A statue of Captain Cook in New Zealand that has been repeatedly defaced and daubed with graffiti is to be removed by the council a year out from the 250-year anniversary of his arrival in the country..."

"Nick Tupara, spokesman for the Ngati Oneone tribe, said according to historical records, Cook's crew shot nine Maori men of his tribe, including Tupara's ancestors. Six of the men are believed to have died.

"Ngati Oneone has long opposed having the controversial statue of Cook placed on the sacred mountain of Titirangi, and on Monday the Gisborne district council said it would be moved to the Tairawhiti Museum instead."<sup>114</sup>

### Gandhi Also Imperfect

"A Mahatma Gandhi statue has been removed from the campus of the University of Ghana after protests from students and faculty who argue the Indian independence leader considered Africans 'inferior'..."

"A 2015 book by two South African writers pointed to instances where Gandhi complained that Indians were being forced to use the same separate entrances as Africans, meaning 'their civilised habits ... would be degraded to the habits of aboriginal natives'.

"About the mixing of the Kaffirs with the Indians, I must confess I feel most strongly,' he wrote in a letter in 1904.

"More sympathetic students of Gandhi's life say his views were ignorant and prejudiced but a product of their time, and that his campaigns for social justice hold universal resonance and have fuelled some civil rights activism in Africa."<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/dec/19/british-economy-forecast-to-fall-in-gdp-rankings>

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/02/captain-cook-statue-removed-new-zealand-mountain-maori-protests/>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/14/racist-gandhi-statue-removed-from-university-of-ghana>

Gandhi also accepted India's own Apartheid, the caste system that fragments all Hindus into separate little groups. Wanted to humanise it, but its very existence implies inequality.

## And Who Cares?

"What kind of people would you expect the newspapers to interview most? Those with the most to say, perhaps, or maybe those with the richest and weirdest experiences. Might it be philosophers, or detectives, or doctors working in war zones, refugees, polar scientists, street children, firefighters, base jumpers, activists, writers or free divers? No. It's actors. I haven't conducted an empirical study, but I would guess that between a third and a half of the major interviews in the newspapers feature people who make their living by adopting someone else's persona and speaking someone else's words."<sup>116</sup>

These are also rich people, if they are famous enough to get media attention. Fine for tricking ordinary people into ignoring their own interests.

## Hong Kong Rail Link: Law Beyond Space and Time?

"A high-speed rail link has been launched in Hong Kong, connecting the territory with mainland China.

"The Express Rail Link connects Hong Kong to the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou in 40 minutes - less than half the time taken by older trains.

"Chinese authorities will be able to operate at a joint checkpoint at the station, and on the trains.

"This is controversial as it marks the first time Chinese criminal law will be enforced in Hong Kong territory.

"Critics say this violates Hong Kong's freedoms and mini-constitution."<sup>117</sup>

This is typical of a view of law that began in the West, and has been picked up elsewhere. Law exists outside of space and time and should not be bothered by material circumstances.

Since China already has controls and enforces them, would the protestors prefer that the entire train stop exactly at the legal border, delaying everyone while checks are made?

Sensibly, checks are made at the station. You'd not be there unless you were going to Mainland China, and would anyway be subject to their laws.

Exactly the same applies to Eurostar going through the Channel Tunnel, though these are currently minimal, since we are still in the European Union. And of course what checks they are, apply only to those who choose to take that particular train.

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<sup>116</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/03/culture-politics-boris-trump-corbyn-george-monbiot>

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-45612749>

## Power Grids

Meantime China has leaders who believe in Material Reality rather than a God who would help you out if you prat around in a devout manner. And they are doing more than most other governments to adjust for Climate Change. Including going for better power generation:

"China's Giant Transmission Grid Could Be the Key to Cutting Climate Emissions...

"These massive networks could help slash climate emissions by enabling fluctuating renewable sources like wind and solar to generate a far larger share of the electricity used by these countries. The longer, higher-capacity lines make it possible to balance out the dimming sun in one time zone with, say, wind, hydroelectric, or geothermal energy several zones away.

"Politics and bureaucracy have stymied the deployment of such immense, modern power grids in much of the world. In the United States, it can take more than a decade to secure the necessary approvals for the towers, wires, and underground tubes that cut across swaths of federal, national, state, county, and private lands—on the rare occasion when they get approved at all."<sup>118</sup>

I've not heard much recently of sensible schemes to gather solar power in the deserts of North Africa and pipe it to Europe.

## Failing Ukraine Blames Russia Again

"In his most fiery rhetoric of the crisis, [Ukrainian president] Poroshenko accused Putin of wanting to annex Ukraine, telling the German newspaper Bild on Thursday: 'Don't believe Putin's lies. Putin wants the old Russian empire back. Crimea, Donbass, the whole country.' Likening Putin to a Russian tsar, he said: 'He believes his empire cannot function without Ukraine – he sees us as his colony.'"<sup>119</sup>

I've said before that Ukrainian democracy has been a sad failure, with the electorate violently rejecting whatever they chose at the last election.<sup>120</sup>

Putin has kept the pro-Russian parts of Ukraine at a distance, apart from Crimea where he had a strong need and a good case. And Poroshenko is yet another useless Ukrainian leader who quarrels with Russia as a diversion. Sent ships to directly challenge Russia's annexation of Crimea, by sailing through waters that Russia claims to control.

<sup>118</sup> <https://medium.com/mit-technology-review/chinas-giant-transmission-grid-could-be-the-key-to-cutting-climate-emissions-1f0ead2f2b71>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/29/russia-blocked-ukrainian-azov-sea-ports-minister>

<sup>120</sup> See <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/2015-magazine/2015-07-magazine/2015-07-ukraine-illegally-removed-its-elected-president/> and <https://gwydionwilliams.com/46-globalisation/ukraine-kievs-five-day-war-machine/>.

"There was, however, a widespread sense among opposition figures and analysts that Mr. Poroshenko aimed to put off the March election, noting that he had not called for martial law during previous points in the conflict when the fighting was far worse."<sup>121</sup>

What they actually needed was an authoritarian leader like Putin, who could expect to be in power for years and so would serve the National Interest rather than his self-interest in needing to win the next election. But it seems Ukraine still trusts Western advice, no matter how bad things get.

### Let's Harass Some More Foreigners

"The foreign secretary, Jeremy Hunt, has ordered an independent, global review into the persecution of Christians of all nationalities amid claims that not enough is being done to defend the rights of nearly 200 million Christians at risk of persecution today."

"The unprecedented Foreign Office review will be led by the Bishop of Truro, Rt Rev Philip Mounstephen, and will make recommendations on the practical steps the government can take to better support those under threat. It will be specifically directed at the persecution of Christians, and not religious minorities in general, reflecting the foreign secretary's view that since Christianity is the established faith in the UK, it is legitimate for the state resources to be devoted to the review. The review is due to report by Easter."<sup>122</sup>

Will they dare report that Iraq under Saddam Hussein was safe for Christians? Also safe for various small regional religions like Mandaeans and Yazidis?

Will they look back into history, and note that the new Turkish Republic expelled most of its once-tolerated Christian minorities? Did this after Western powers had repeatedly used them as an excuse to interfere with the Ottoman Empire?

### Computer Perils

"The primary reason computers are insecure is that most buyers aren't willing to pay — in money, features, or time to market — for security to be built into the products and services they want. As a result, we are stuck with hackable internet protocols, computers that are riddled with vulnerabilities and networks that are easily penetrated.

"We have accepted this tenuous situation because, for a very long time, computer security has mostly been about data. Banking data stored by financial institutions might be important, but nobody dies when it's stolen. Facebook account data might be important, but again, nobody dies when it's stolen. Regardless of how bad these hacks are, it has historically been cheaper to

accept the results than to fix the problems...

"Buyers can't differentiate between secure and insecure products, so sellers prefer to spend their money on features that buyers can see."<sup>123</sup>

Not many people would pay 25% more for a truly secure computer, if this was an option. Probably only government regulation could enforce it. I suspect that governments are not that discontented with systems that let them spy on dissidents who fondly suppose they are untraceable.

I warned about this back in the year 2000, at a time when most experts were sure that cheap computers and the internet would bring down authoritarian governments.<sup>124</sup> Few experts expecting their solid survival outside of the Arab world. Nor the proliferation of crime that has actually happened.

The whole mentality of the Personal Computer and Internet revolution was anti-state. A fond delusion that individual moral actions ignoring State Power will solve it all, no matter how often this fails to happen.

### Fond Memories of Fascists

"Several thousand anti-fascist monuments have been vandalised or destroyed since Croatia's independence in 1991.

"Critics accuse Croatian authorities of turning a blind eye to the surge of nostalgia for the Ustasha – the former pro-Nazi regime that persecuted and killed hundreds of thousands of people, notably Serbs, anti-fascist Croats, Jews and Roma opponents."<sup>125</sup>

It began with Franjo Tuđman, first President of independent Croatia. He was an enthusiast for that wartime regime, and was listed as one of the Denialists in Deborah Lipstadt's book *Denying the Holocaust*. But when it counted, the West held that it was very wicked for Serbs in Serb-majority regions of Croatia to object to being ruled by him

### Another Lost British Opportunity

"One of the world's first digital clocks, which was made by a man in his shed, has been sold at auction.

"Thomas Bromley, an engineer and amateur inventor, created his Digitron Electric Clock in 1961 at his home in Hull.

"He held the patent to the design for three years but chose not to renew it - potentially costing him millions of pounds...

"A year after the patent ran out, the Japanese started manufacturing 'virtually an identical clock and sold it in many thousands', he said."<sup>126</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, it was widely said that British

<sup>121</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/26/world/europe/russia-ukraine-kerch-strait.html>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/26/jeremy-hunt-orders-global-review-into-persecution-of-christians>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/11/opinion/internet-hacking-cybersecurity-iot.html>

<sup>124</sup> Uncle Sam's Web, <https://gwydionwilliams.com/46-globalisation/the-web-is-always-insecure/>

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/08/croatian-man-breaks-leg-vandalising-anti-fascist-monument>

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-46252838>

business had declined because it hated change. Because it had repeatedly neglected British inventions that had succeeded elsewhere.

Then in the 1980s, Thatcher managed to get the standard view changed. Now it was British business that was brilliant, and unfairly held back by needless government meddling.

A failure to actually improve on the older Mixed Economy system has not so far led to Thatcher's economic policies being junked as the rubbish they always were.

## Immigration

"The 100 areas where people are most likely to oppose immigration are in towns or on the outskirts of cities, with 93 of them in the Midlands or north of England. 'The strong view in many of these communities is that they have been abandoned and left to rot by the political establishment in preference to addressing the needs and wishes of new arrivals in the cities,'..."

"The 100 areas most linked with what the report calls the 'confident multicultural' population are all in major cities or very close to universities. Overall, 60% of people believe immigration as a whole is good for Britain – an increase. But in the wake of the 2017 terror attacks and grooming gang prosecutions, 32% of people believe there are Muslim 'no-go areas' in Britain governed by Sharia law, a view endorsed by 49% of leave voters in the Brexit referendum."<sup>127</sup>

Suffering people blame immigration, not the New Right. Newspapers owned and often subsidised by those who've gained at the expense of ordinary people are keen to encouraging this.

## British Debts

"There is a story that is commonly told in Britain that the colonisation of India - as horrible as it may have been - was not of any major economic benefit to Britain itself. If anything, the administration of India was a cost to Britain. So the fact that the empire was sustained for so long - the story goes - was a gesture of Britain's benevolence.

"New research by the renowned economist Utsa Patnaik - just published by Columbia University Press - deals a crushing blow to this narrative. Drawing on nearly two centuries of detailed data on tax and trade, Patnaik calculated that Britain drained a total of nearly \$45 trillion from India during the period 1765 to 1938.

"It's a staggering sum. For perspective, \$45 trillion is 17 times more than the total annual gross domestic product of the United Kingdom today..."

"The East India Company began collecting taxes in India, and then cleverly used a portion of those revenues (about a third) to fund the purchase of Indian goods for British use. In other words,

<sup>127</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/17/wednesday-briefing-britains-better-vs-worse-off-divide-on-immigration>

instead of paying for Indian goods out of their own pocket, British traders acquired them for free, 'buying' from peasants and weavers using money that had just been taken from them.

"It was a scam - theft on a grand scale. Yet most Indians were unaware of what was going on because the agent who collected the taxes was not the same as the one who showed up to buy their goods."<sup>128</sup>

They were also forced to grow opium, much of which was then sold to independent traders who illegally sold it to China. The Opium Wars were fought to defend this very lucrative scam. And British India had an official Opium Department that controlled it with a legal monopoly.<sup>129</sup> George Orwell's father worked there, something he avoided mentioning when he claimed to be defending Pure Truth.

Angus Maddison's *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* shows the incomes of individual Indians making little progress under British rule. Only advancing once India had its own government.

## Bliaring about Labour Anti-semitism

"A fringe venue at the Labour conference was evacuated last night after the screening of a film about my friend Jackie Walker was cancelled by a terrorist bomb threat. Jackie, a black Jewish prominent critic of Israel, is currently among those suspended from the Labour Party over accusations of anti-semitism which are, in her case, nonsense.

"What is astonishing is that the state and corporate media, which has made huge play around the entirely fake news of threats to pro-Israel MP Luciana Berger leading to her being given a police escort to protect her from ordinary delegates, has completely ignored this actual and disruptive pro-Israeli threat – except where they have reported the bomb threat, using the big lie technique, as a further example of anti-semitism in the Labour Party!"<sup>130</sup>

A case of Bliaring – a term I am using in honour of Tony Blair and his famous statement that Saddam Hussein could deploy 'weapons of mass destruction' in 15 minutes. That this was just battlefield poison gas was not mentioned, feeding into the fantasy of Saddam being dangerous to Britain.

When Bliaring, you need not say anything that you do not believe to be true. But you refrain from saying awkward off-message things that you well know to be true. And do so with the clear intention of making people believe things that you do not yourself believe to be true.

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/britain-stole-45-trillion-india-181206124830851.html>

<sup>129</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin\\_1954-01-01\\_3\\_page002.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin_1954-01-01_3_page002.html)

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2018/09/pro-israeli-terror-at-labour-conference-covered-up-by-msm/>

## The Other Microsoft Man

Paul Allen, who died back in October, never had the fame of Bill Gates. But he was almost as important in the rise of Microsoft:

"It was Mr Allen who in late 1974 insisted that Mr Gates rush over to the news-stand to see the latest issue of Popular Electronics, a magazine, whose cover featured the Altair 8800, a new computer with a powerful chip—an event which inspired Mr Gates to leave Harvard University to start a company. It was Mr Allen who came up with the name Microsoft, a combination of the words 'microcomputers', as PCs were then called, and 'software'. And it was Mr Allen who in 1981 negotiated the deal that became the basis for the firm's success: for less than \$50,000 it bought the software written by a Seattle programmer, which would become the operating system, first called MS-DOS and then Windows, that ruled the computing world in the 1990s and early 2000s."<sup>131</sup>

Actually Windows was a wholly new development. New computer code, but the concept was borrowed from the Apple Macintosh, which in turn took it from the Xerox Parc. MS-DOS was the basis for their massive initial success, and Windows was initially built on top of it, only later becoming independent. But the role of partners in Microsoft success was real enough. It was part of a pattern I had noticed some time back:

"In the computer world of the 1970s, a lot of the successes were partnerships between two individuals, often with gifts in different areas. Bill Gates and Paul Allen for *Microsoft*, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak for *Apple*, Mark Zuckerberg and Eduardo Saverin for the beginnings of *Facebook*, replaced later by Sean Parker."<sup>132</sup>

Also seen more widely – Lennon and McCartney, Rolls and Royce, Boulton and Watt for Steam Engines, and many others.

How many talented individuals never found the right business partner and never turned their good ideas into a grand commercial success? Had their failed ideas picked up profitably by others? This is very relevant to the size of rewards merited by those who do make it.

## Muslim Friends and Enemies

"Ever since the midterm election, conservative media in the United States have targeted with special zeal Ilhan Omar, an incoming Somali-American Democratic congresswoman and a devout Muslim who wears hijab. In response to Democrats' push to remove a headwear ban on the House floor to accommodate Omar, conservative commentator and pastor E.W. Jackson complained on a radio show that Muslims were transforming

Congress into an "Islamic republic."

"The Democratic Party has several rising political stars with Arab or Muslim backgrounds, all of whom have become objects of such conspiracy theories. But it's not only American conservatives who have been indulging in this culture war. The organized attacks have also been coming from abroad—specifically, from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

"The midterm elections have amplified an existing suspicion in Middle Eastern media of Muslim political activism in the United States. Academics, media outlets, and commentators close to Persian Gulf governments have repeatedly accused Omar, Rashida Tlaib (another newly elected Muslim congresswoman), and Abdul El-Sayed (who made a failed bid to become governor of Michigan) of being secret members of the Muslim Brotherhood who are hostile to the governments of Saudi Arabia and the UAE."<sup>133</sup>

The Western media have also been Blaring when they speak of 'Muslim Terrorism'. All of the significant groups are followers of Wahhabism,<sup>134</sup> an extremist version of Islam that began in what is now Saudi Arabia and was the main force behind the rise of the Saudi dynasty. A creed that Saudi Arabia has been encouraging all round the world.

Muslims are not going to cease to be Muslims, particularly now that secular Western values are discredited by social evils caused by the New Right. But there are plenty of other versions of Islam – some lax, but many highly devout but also law-abiding. But not always having a servile attitude to liberal values, and very often critical of Israel. And Saudi Arabia owns big chunks of Western business and has tremendous 'clout'. So the media keep on saying 'Muslim Terrorism' and not 'Wahhabi Terrorism'.

## China and the Pope

I think the current Pope was more influenced by Liberation Theology than he lets on.

Liberation Theology was an adjustment to the type of semi-socialist Corporatist society that seemed to be emerging as the global norm in the 1950s and 1960s. It was messed up when the Soviet Union made a series of bad choices. But New Right ideology is far more at odds with Christianity than Marxism is, even though it has been very clever at getting vast numbers of not-so-clever Christians to vote for it.

China is the rising power, but has a niche for religions that will co-exist with Communist Party power. Such a deal is a lot less strange than some of the compromises that Roman Catholicism has made in the past. And this Pope has healed a dispute than began when Roman Catholicism was strongly anti-Communist, while Mao hoped to create a wholly atheist society.

Then, they were mortal foes. Now they can find useful

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.economist.com/business/2018/10/18/paul-allen-leaves-a-lasting-legacy-both-at-microsoft-and-in-seattle>

<sup>132</sup> *Business Success a Mix of Skill and Luck*,  
<https://gwydionwilliams.com/history-and-philosophy/why-business-success-is-a-mix-of-skill-and-luck/>

<sup>133</sup> <https://medium.com/foreign-policy/saudi-arabia-declares-war-on-americas-muslim-congresswomen-e345bfc0397e>

<sup>134</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism>

compromises.

“Pope Francis has recognised seven bishops appointed by China as part of a historic accord to improve ties between the Vatican and the communist country.

“The issue of who appoints bishops has been at the heart of a dispute since China first broke off diplomatic ties with the Holy See in 1951.

“China has some 10 million Catholics.

“Pope Francis hopes the deal ‘will allow the wounds of the past to be overcome’ and bring about full Catholic unity in China, the Vatican said.”<sup>135</sup>

“Because they had not been selected by the Vatican, [the seven bishops] had previously been excommunicated...

“Other big questions remain, including who will have the final say over appointing bishops in China: the pope or the Chinese government. Neither side provided a clear answer.”<sup>136</sup>

### Staying Alive

“In 1980, the richest cohort of middle-age American men could expect to live until about 83 and the poorest to 76. By 2010, the richest American males had gained six years in life expectancy, living to 89 on average, while life expectancy for the poorest men hadn’t improved”<sup>137</sup>

“Stories about suicide that appear in the news tend to focus on celebrities who have taken their own lives and on clusters of deaths among students. They miss the bigger picture: that, at a global level, suicide has declined by 29% since 2000. Among most Western countries, rates have been falling for decades. In Britain, for instance, the rate peaked in 1934, during the Depression. But elsewhere, the decline has happened more recently. China’s rate started to come down in the 1990s; in Russia, Japan, South Korea and India rates have all fallen significantly in the past decade. Western Europe’s rate is still declining slowly. America is the big exception: its rate has risen by 18% this century. Twenty years ago, America’s rate was half China’s. Now it is twice China’s. But the net gain is still huge. The drop in the global rate has saved 2.8m lives since 2000. Three times as many as have been killed in battle in that period.”<sup>138</sup>

In Britain, our dear Prime Minister celebrated World Mental Health Day by appointing suicide prevention minister.<sup>139</sup> But with ‘Universal Credit’ not yet abandoned and still highly oppressive, she already has a **Minister for Suicide Encouragement**.

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-45613668#>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/22/world/asia/china-vatican-bishops.html>

<sup>137</sup> <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/1/9/16860994/life-expectancy-us-income-inequality>

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2018/11/30/why-the-global-suicide-rate-is-falling>

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-45804225>

### ‘Arab Spring’ Unsprung

“The Tunisian elite has focused on building a new political system, with little attention paid to deep social and economic reforms. The lives of those young people who brought down the authoritarian regime of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011 has barely changed. Youth unemployment is as high as 36 percent. Inflation has risen sharply, hitting a peak of 7.8 percent in June this year, its highest level in nearly three decades.”<sup>140</sup>

Most places, the Arab Spring was a disaster. In Tunisia, it was merely futile. It is a great pity, but it is also a harsh truth that the liberal-left need to face up to.

### Aftermaths of Vietnam’s American War

“Decades after the war with America ended, Vietnamese families continue to search for the remains of their kin who are still missing in action...

“More than 300,000 Vietnamese soldiers are still missing from the war with America, a heartbreaking statistic that reverberates across thousands of Vietnamese families, mostly in the north. And though Vietnam’s government has made scattered efforts to search for remains, the resources devoted to finding the missing Vietnamese are a small fraction of those devoted to recovering the 1,600 Americans still listed as M.I.A. from the same war...

“The task of identifying the remains was complicated by the brutal nature of the war; the artillery used by Americans and their Southern Vietnamese allies was so powerful it often obliterated everything in its path. Even when the search teams found a corpse or a set of bones, identification was difficult because North Vietnamese soldiers weren’t issued dog tags as their American and South Vietnamese counterparts were.”<sup>141</sup>

There was indeed less care for individual rights, when it was a matter of national survival.

It was a dirty war on both sides, and the US military did some of the worst stuff, well aware that most Vietnamese did not want them.<sup>142</sup>

Had the USA won that war, they might have done much more of the destructive bullying that they tried after the Soviet collapse.<sup>143</sup>

### Water as a Luxury

Much of the world has been harmed by the New Right dogma that Public Benefit is futile and

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/08/opinion/tunisia-economy-essebsi-ennahda.html>

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/21/opinion/vietnam-war-missing.html>

<sup>142</sup> *The Pardoners Tale: Colin Powell and My Lai*, <https://gwydionwilliams.com/52-usa/colin-powell-and-vietnam-massacres/>

<sup>143</sup> *What we owe to General Giap*, <https://gwydionwilliams.com/politics-various-articles/how-the-vietnam-war-extended-freedom-in-the-west/>

Private Greed should solve it all. One instance, the water in Pakistan:

"Public drinking water here wasn't always poisonous. Even toward the end of the 1990s, bottled water was reserved for the ultra-elite — for heads of state hosting other heads of states or for posh Pakistanis who vacationed on the French Riviera.

"But today, thanks to pollution and a lack of investment in infrastructure, if you don't drink bottled or filtered water, you are condemning yourself and your little ones to horrible diseases and maybe even to a new form of the ancient affliction called death by contamination."<sup>144</sup>

Bottled water also sells well in Britain, even though our tap water is purer and safer. People have been persuaded that if you pay for it, it must be superior.

## Welfare Falsehoods

Most Britons believe Welfare costs more and has much more fraud than is really the case.

They believe that unemployment benefit takes up 41% of welfare: it is actually 3%.

They believe that 27% of unemployment benefit is fraudulent: it is actually 0.7%.<sup>145</sup>

Those are the official government figures. But newspapers have been 'Bliaring': avoiding mentioning the agreed numbers and instead making a gigantic fuss about the occasional fraud to make it seem widespread. So the ordinary people being cheated by New Right economics think they are being defended. Believe that '*my money is taken in taxes and is then given to people who won't work*'.

The Tories may have believed their own nonsense. Universal Credit, which has made them seriously unpopular, was clearly built on a belief welfare is inherently bad. They dare not say so, so they attack in the name of freedom.

They also revive the older and seductive idea of helping those 'most in need'.

Welfare and similar payments are easier if everyone gets them. You could then rely on

Income Tax and similar taxes to ensure social justice. This is simple, effective, cheap to administer, and the very rich hate it. They think that their gigantic incomes are not nearly enough for the wonderful people they are.

The whole thing was helped by so many on the left having an anti-state. Ignoring 5000 years of history and our painful emergence from tribalism and feudalism. Thinking they would be fine without it.

Mostly not changing their minds, no matter how their alternative fails.

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<sup>144</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/23/opinion/pakistan-water-contamination-bottled.html>

<sup>145</sup> <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/talking-politics-deploying-the-word-welfare-in-an-official-capacity-is-on-the-increase/>