

PROBLEMS

(formerly: **Problems Of Capitalism & Socialism,
Problems Of Communism**)

New Series, Number 41

Will Labour Now Reject the Young?

Corbyn in 2017 got the largest Labour vote in England since Blair's first victory.

Blair's 2nd and 3rd victories were down to a slump in votes for the Tories under three unpopular leaders. The 2019 defeat was caused by large numbers of voters wanting a Tory victory to ensure Brexit. But often not voting Tory: it was mostly a slump in Labour voting.

Page 2

Blogs on Covid-19. Comments from February 15th.

Page 18

Free Will and the Coolheart Generation

'The Individual' is a simplification of the complexities of human nature. And the society we grow up in shapes us far more than we realise.

How the rebels of the 1960s misunderstood, imagining that they were Essential Human Nature breaking free of artifical restraints.

Were often selfish then. And have got worse, with most of them voting Tory and denying the next generation the benefits they had.

Page 19

Will Labour Now Reject the Young?

By Gwydion M. Williams

Labour and Feed-the-Rich Economics

As expected, Keith Starmer has decisively won the Labour Leadership election.

But what this means remains unclear:

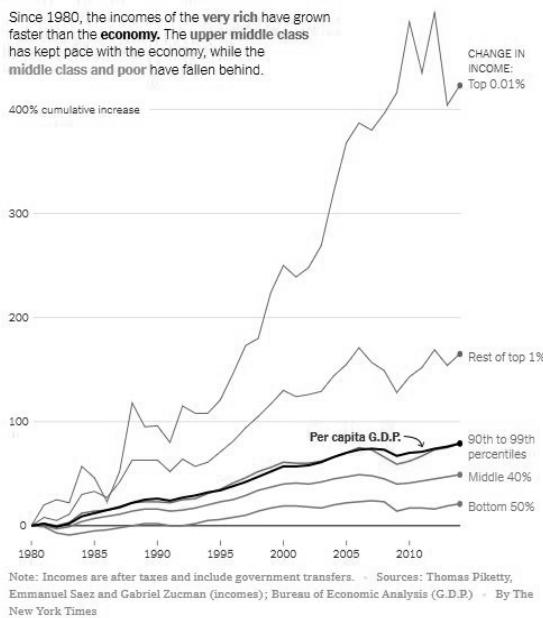
"[Starmer] has described himself as a socialist but not a Corbynite, and vowed to keep key policies from the Corbyn era, such as nationalising rail, mail and water and repealing anti-union laws."¹

Let's hope he means it. Because in Britain, a majority of English voters under thirty were enthusiasts for Corbyn.

The young have rejected the right-wing excuse that the shift in income to the rich was a natural and unavoidable process. That it is down to more complex jobs needing more education at talent.

They know something is wrong. A society that is richer overall cannot give them the secure jobs and generous welfare that the previous generations got.

Though they may not understand why. May blame the wrong people. Some go over to right-wing populism.



The left has not helped by trying to contrast 1% against 99%, which would fit a picture of talent and work being rewarded.

The reality has been enormous gains for the richest 1%. And among them, the richest 0.1% and 0.01% have made the biggest gains.

The Next Nine – people in the top 10% of earners but not the top 1% - have held their own in the big shifts since the 1980s.

In terms of education, intelligence, skills or hard work, the Next Nine are not inferior to the Richest

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-52164589>

1%. What they lack is the social power to demand gigantic amounts of money for some skill that will also make gigantic amounts of money for someone else.

The top sports people add no real wealth, but they do attract viewers for advertising.

Likewise a small number of musicians and actors and writers sell more and make huge profits if their names become known. They are often little different from the others.

And above all, the winners are business people.

From the 1980s, they have been left free to decide the true worth of people like themselves. So they pay themselves 10 or 20 times as much, while doing a rather worse job increasing the overall wealth of the society.

They also get rewarded for their blunders, if enough of them make the same blunders at the same time.

The crisis of 2008 was caused by a massive speculative bubble. But rather than nationalise banks and let Hedge Funds lose money or collapse, the government stepped in to subsidise the very rich. Paid for it by Austerity, a squeeze on those who had done nothing wrong.

It isn't Economic Freedom – there are still as many rules as ever. But fewer for the rich.

Nor is it Low Tax or Small Government – tax and government are much the same as they were in the 1970s.

The true name is **Feed-the-Rich**.

Labour should start calling it that.

And Starmer could say that on economic matters, he wants to roll back a Tory Radicalism that has visibly failed. Keep actual innovation for social matters, where it is popular.

Say that Trade Union weakness has done at least as much damage as their strength did in the 1970s. That a sensible balance needs to be restored.

New Right policies let the strongest 1% grab wealth from the weaker 90%. A lot of the actual talent is found in the Next Nine, who have not gained or lost much.

And also in the 90%. Plenty of hard-working talented people, but not in a position to demand above-average incomes.

The argument that what's being rewarded is superior work does not hold water. And younger people seem to be noticing this.

In the USA, the young strongly backed Saunders against Biden.

And it is not like the radicalism of the 1970s, which

was often not realistic. Where the main attitude was ‘don’t take ‘yes’ for an answer’. Where radicals refused compromise and demanded more than ordinary people actually wanted. Where right-wing parties could claim to be speaking common sense – though Feed-the-Rich was their real intention.

Today’s radicalism is much more sensible and feasible.

Sadly, it now seems almost certain that the US Democrats will choose Biden. If elected, he will probably continue the policies of Bill Clinton and Obama.

The policies Hilary Clinton offered, and which helped get Trump elected.

Common sense, they’d call it. But common sense in a changing world is often wildly mistaken.

It used to be ‘common sense’ that white males must be dominant. That women could not do jobs outside of caring, nurturing and feeling strong emotions. That the non-white subjects of Europe’s empires could not run their own lives. That society could not last unless would-be homosexuals were discouraged as strongly as possible. That people fit to run the whole society came only from the old upper class. That respect for the monarchy was the foundation of social order.

We have revised ‘common sense’ so frequently in the 20th century that there is no good reason to trust the current version.

For most people, ‘common sense’ is what you believed about the world when you were in your 20s. What you probably still believe at 50, 60, 70, 80 or 90, no matter how much the world has changed.

In both the 2017 and 2019 elections, English people under 40 overwhelmingly voted Labour.

Things were probably different in Scotland. Scots from 2015 have been abandoning Labour and voting Scottish Nationalist. Wales is probably the same, but Welsh views get swamped. But for England, where the bulk of the electorate live, age was decisive in both 2017 and 2019:

I had already noticed this back in 2017, and blogged about it.² Found also that educated people were much more likely to vote Labour. Felt that this was a good indicator of which party had the real political wisdom, considering that the educated generally have higher incomes and ought to be more likely to vote for right-wing parties.

And found also that it had not been true in 2015.

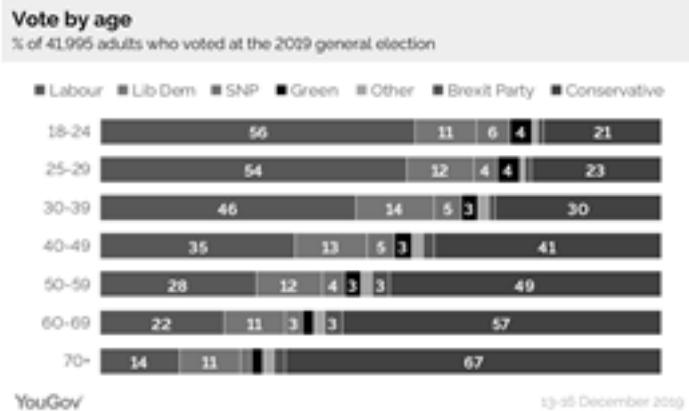
When Labour offered nothing more than another dose of Blair’s policies, there was no enthusiasm.

In the modern era, right-wing parties are led by clever, rich and unscrupulous people. And similar people in the wider society take a short-sighted selfish

² <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/British-Tories-rely-on-the-Old-and-the-Uneducated>

attitude and support them. But to hold power, they depend on the votes of the elderly and uneducated.

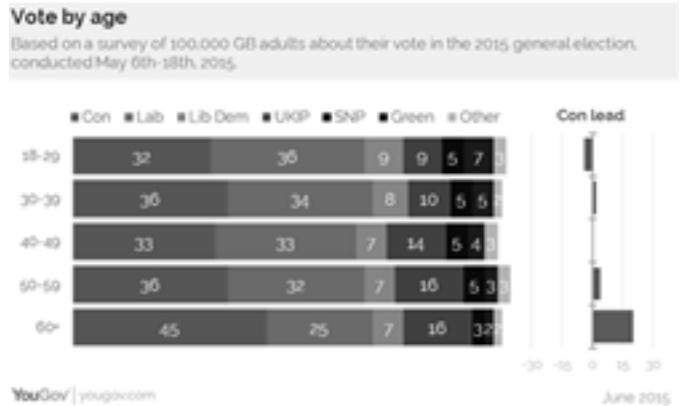
The intelligent and talented who are not rich are mostly found on the left. Including the bulk of scientists, whose jobs make them think objectively about the world.



There is a broad failure of once-popular New Right ideas. These had been in trouble in the late 1980s, and might have been abandoned after the massive economic crisis of 1987. That was a near-collapse of capitalism that media dominated by the right and by the rich have managed to put out of popular historic memory.

But the Soviet collapse reinvigorated them.

Because Soviet socialism went badly wrong in the 1970s, it does not mean that the New Right were ever right about why it failed. Their theories simply cannot account for the economic success of the Soviet Union under Stalin, or of China under Mao.



To say that there was also a cost in lives does not explain away the awkward fact that such systems can work. And have been copied elsewhere without any unusual cost in lives.

And studies are anyway biased, exaggerating Leninist errors and ignoring errors by the people they approve of.

Current Western accounts of Mao’s China are grossly dishonest. They mention only that there was a setback after the over-ambitious Great Leap Forward. Not that other highly risky and ambitious campaigns succeeded brilliantly.³

³ <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/How-Mao-Saved-Vast-Numbers-of-Chinese-Lives>

Experts publishing scholarly works not noticed by the popular press record a general improvement of life expectancy in Mao's China. They see it as remarkable. The setback following the failure of the Great Leap Forward was secondary. But this gets hidden from the general public. But this gets hidden from the general public. Books and articles on China seldom mention it.

The Soviet Union was overtaking the USA under Stalin, and in Khrushchev's early years. Things went disastrously wrong under Brezhnev and his successors. But that was the ending of one particular socialist experiment. Not the end of socialism.

The young mostly vote Labour. But this seems to be a recent trend. Why?

To clarify my ideas, I looked at when the various groups of voters would have been born, and when they were 25.

Age in 2019	Born	Were 25
80	1939	1964
70	1949	1974
60	1959	1984
50	1969	1994
40	1979	2004
30	1989	2014
20	1999	Future
15	2004	Future

People favoured Corbyn-Labour if they experienced the 1990s and later decades while their minds were still flexible.

This wasn't true in 2015, when Ed Miliband sounded ashamed of the excellent left-wing policies he was advancing. When Labour did indeed seem to be living in the past: but the recent past of New Labour that had visibly not worked for most people.

Corbyn a Disaster?

I am one of those who insist that the problem in 2019 was Brexit, not Corbyn's return to serious socialism.

Corbyn is being blamed for '*the worst result since 1935*'.

1935 wasn't that bad, if you think about *political outcomes*. If you don't see Labour existing just to give nice jobs to ambitious MPs.

Labour under Corbyn can claim success for the remarkable return to government intervention and government spending we are now seeing under Boris Johnson.⁴ He was able to push out a Chancellor who wanted to be 'prudent' and put in a man who was happy to spend more.

Labour should be celebrating this as a triumph for their ideas. Should criticise the Tories for spending on the wrong things, certainly. For not fully reversing the damage done by the years of Austerity. But also celebrate a *victory*, rather than seeing Labour as noble upholders of principle who are also doomed to a long defeat.

The broad aims of socialists were massively advanced from 1945 to 1979. And the economic reversal under

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/14/this-tory-budget-is-keynes-reborn-will-hutton>

Thatcher went along with a crumbling of Tory social values. By their replacement by things that had once been Fringe Radicalism.

I believe Thatcher was sincere in her hope of restoring the comfortable social values she had grown up with in Grantham. Or comfortable for her, and those like her who were well-off and did not wish not to go beyond the severe social limits of her day.

In turning a blind eye to obvious homosexuals and in trying to save love-cheats like Cecil Parkinson, Thatcher was being a traditionally Tory. Perhaps less competent: I find it puzzling that someone at the top of politics could not persuade some unimportant man to take responsibility for the child that Parkinson had fathered on Sara Keays.

I would rate Thatcher as a sincere and ignorant bigot. As someone not fit for national leadership. She naively believed the Tory version of New Right politics. And probably never read anything by Robert E. Heinlein.

Heinlein was a popular US science-fiction author who became a ranting enemy of socialism and fan of the rich. He also hoped for very much the disintegration of conventional social morals that did in fact happen.⁵ And he was very popular among the more thoughtful of the New Right.

Labour could and should say that much of its *social* agenda was imposed on the Tories. The supposed defenders of Old Morality now have women and non-whites and open gays and lesbians at the top of their party.

Have a Prime Minister who doesn't even pretend to be following traditional rules on marriage and philandering.

Tony Blair's time in power was useful in establishing the new normal. But he had no need to accept Thatcherism.

The Soviet Union collapsing in 1989-91 was demoralising for many on the left. But as I mentioned earlier, the Western system had almost collapsed in the half-forgotten crisis of 1987.⁶

Earlier, Labour's 1930s policies of clear opposition to Hitler and in favour of Welfare were vindicated in the struggle against Hitler. The expected 1940 election being postponed till the war was won, we got a dramatic victory in 1945.

Labour in 2017 and 2019 certainly lost some traditional Labour voters by being clearly in favour of welfare and public ownership. But it gained millions more, by being clearly ready for radical change.

Blair's timid performance after his 1997 triumph must have put off many voters. When he twice got re-elected, he still got far fewer votes than Corbyn did in 2017. Blair's 2nd and 3rd victories were won against an unimpressive and unpopular Tory Party. Had they been led by someone like Boris Johnson, it might have been another story.

We lost old voters, particularly in 2019. We also picked up millions of *young* voters.

⁵ Heinlein began as a fairly normal writer by US SF standards. I would recommend *Citizen of the Galaxy* as a good read and a humane story, though not realistic in imagining space-age slavery.

From the notorious *Starship Troopers*, he preached fantasy versions of the ideas later realised as the New Right.

Many people were bored by his later books, from *Time Enough for Love*.

⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Monday_\(1987\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Monday_(1987))

We certainly lost some of those elderly voters by being clearly for racial and sexual equality. But do we really want those votes? Will we cater to the most prejudiced part of the working class? Or should we leave it to the Tories to say '*if you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour*'. Which is exactly what they did in 1964 to win Smethwick, a seat that was normally Labour.⁷

The official Tory candidate denied that this was racist. Just like today's Tories, with their much more subtle workings of widespread racist and anti-immigrant feeling.

Modern racists are a decaying breed, keen to think of themselves as victims. They lack the self-assured belief in White Superiority that previous generations of Britons had. The centre-right know how to work this.

You probably won't find your library displaying once-popular works like *Sanders of the River*,⁸ or anything by Dennis Wheatley.⁹ They were there when I was a teenager, and when open racism won Smethwick.

Those books are entertaining. But their blatant racism offended me less than it should have, though I was already a militant leftist.

You can get them via Amazon, if you doubt me. Or look at one whose blurb I posted, about Chinese and speaking of 'slit-eyed intrigue'.¹⁰

Just as bad was children's writer Enid Blyton, whose work I never liked. But I don't recall being offended by her racist gollywogs, who have apparently been replaced by race-neutral characters in modern editions.¹¹

Younger readers may never have heard of gollywogs. The Wiki has details.¹²

The amusing thing is that the leading Tories have long since ceased to be sincere racists. Not serious about preserving an All-White Britain, as Enoch Powell was. The entire Establishment had accepted multi-racialism, though with some glitches in the Royal Family.

Justified protests at racism always seem to miss this. Fail to rub the noses of the racists in their own weakness compared to what once existed. Don't point out that Centre-Right politicians are using such people, and probably view them with deep contempt.

It is more enjoyable to pose as a defender of Eternal Truths. Things that 'all sensible people know to be true'.

Except that historically, what one generation 'knows' will often be rejected by their children. And I don't suppose that stops happening with us.

The smooth-talking moderates who dominate *The Guardian* don't accept that Corbyn needed to shift public opinion, and in fact did shift it.

Boris Johnson is now saying things that sound to the left of anything that Labour dared say before Corbyn.

We may doubt Johnson's sincerity. But just to have him

7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smethwick_in_the_1964_general_election

8 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Wallace#African_novels_\(Sanders_of_the_River_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Wallace#African_novels_(Sanders_of_the_River_series))

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Wheatley

10 [https://www.flickr.com/photos/45909111@N00/6447307275/in/album-72157608614718792/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/45909111@N00/6447307721/in/album-72157608614718792/). The book was published in 1961!

11 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enid_Blyton#Racism,_xenophobia_and_sexism

12 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golliwog>

junk much of the rhetoric of Thatcherism is a victory.

Yet many in the Parliamentary Labour Party are certain only a labour leader ashamed of Corbynism can win a future election.

They are not seeing the real picture.

In France, there are two large rival socialist parties, plus a strong remnant of the once-mighty French Communists. The traditional French Socialists got over 30% in the 1980s, and over 20% more recently. Fell to a miserable 7.44% in 2017.

Against them, still small but rising fast, is an alliance called *La France Insoumise*.¹³ Translatable as 'Unbowed France', 'Unsubmissive France', or 'Untamed France': I'd go for *Untamed*. (Just as I'd translate Zola's *Les Misérables* as *The Underclass*: calling them *The Miserables* would certainly miss the point.)

France also has destructive rioting – or had before Covid-19 came along. Long-running with the Yellow Vests, and more recently over an attempt to seize the pension rights of ordinary workers.

Similar things are happening elsewhere in Western Europe. Tamed Socialists are losing out. Right-wing populists are gaining. And we see riots by people who mostly don't then vote for a party that might help them.

Western liberalism is widely despised, and deservedly so. But socialists cringing before liberal power also have a bad reputation.

Labour reverting to Tamed Labour would lose far more than it gained. And set a bad example for the rest of the world.

The more extreme believers in 'Tamed Labour' split from the Labour mainstream in 2019. They tried standing on their own, and got a derisory result.

The previous split, the Social Democrats, were justly ridiculed as 'keep politics out of politics'.

They were absorbed into the old and corrupt Liberal tradition, leaving nothing behind except half of their name in the current Liberal-Democrats.

Who achieved very little in 2019.

In terms of seats, it was indeed Labour's worse result since 1935. But a big chunk of that was down to the Scottish Nationalists, well to the left of New Labour. Not timid about it, as Ed Miliband was in 2015.

Labour used to get more than 50 Scottish seats, when Scots elected more than 70 MPS. More than 40 when this was reduced to 59 with Devolution.

40 Scottish Labour seats were lost in 2015, when the Scottish Nationalists dared defy the Tories and Labour would not. Corbyn recovered seven of these in 2017, but this time dropped back to one again.

In terms of votes in England, **Corbyn in 2019 did better than Ed Miliband in 2015 or Gordon Brown in 2010**. It was not so drastic in terms of seats, because 2010 was an exceptional high point for the Liberal-Democrats, never likely to be repeated after the way they endorsed Tory policies in the Coalition. And in 2015, UKIP got nearly 3.88 million votes, taken from both Labour and Tory.

Labour had a major problem during Brexit. We suffered

13 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_France_Insoumise

by being unable to choose either Leave or Remain, when this was the main issue.

Dedicated Leave voters knew that Labour had no chance of forming their own government to renegotiate Leave. Many polls indicated a Hung Parliament, which would have probably given us months more of the same confusion we have had since Theresa May brought back her highly unsatisfactory deal.

Here in detail is what happened:¹⁴

Votes Cast	2010	2015	2017	2019	Shift from 2017 to 2019
Tories	10,703,754	11,299,609	13,636,684	13,966,585	329,901
Labour	8,609,527	9,347,273	12,877,918	10,269,076	-2,608,842
Lib-Dem	6,836,824	2,415,916	2,371,861	3,696,423	1,324,562
Ukip / Brexit	919,546	3,881,099	594,068	665,120	71,052
SNP	491,386	1,454,436	977,568	1,242,372	264,804
Green	265,247	111,160	512,327	865,697	353,370

Percentage of vote	2010	2015	2017	2019	Shift from 2017 to 2019
Tories	36.1	36.8	42.3	43.6	1.30
Labour	29.0	30.4	40.0	32.1	-7.90
Lib-Dem	23.0	7.9	7.4	11.6	4.20
Ukip / Brexit	3.1	12.6	1.8	2.0	0.20
SNP	1.7	4.7	3.0	3.9	0.90
Green	0.9	3.6	1.6	2.7	1.10
Turnout	65.1	66.4	68.8	67.3	-1.50

Year	Turnout	Tory Vote in England	%	Seats	Labour in England	%	Seats	English Centrists ¹⁵	%	Seats
2019	67.4	12,710,845	47.2	345	9,152,034	34.0	180	3,340,835	12.4	7
2017	69.1	12,344,901	45.4	296	11,390,099	41.9	227	2,121,810	7.8	8
2015	65.9	10,483,261	40.9	318	8,087,684	31.6	206	2,098,404	8.2	6
2010	65.5	9,908,169	39.5	297	7,042,398	28.1	191	6,076,189	24.2	43
2005	61.0	8,116,005	35.7	194	8,043,461	35.4	286	5,201,286	22.9	47
2001	59.1	7,705,870	35.2	165	9,056,824	41.4	323	4,246,853	19.4	40
1997	71.5	8,780,881	33.7	165	11,347,882	43.5	328	4,677,565	18.0	34
1992	78.0	12,796,772	45.5	319	9,551,910	33.9	195	5,398,293	19.2	10
1987	75.4	12,546,186	46.2	358	8,006,466	29.5	155	6,467,350	23.8	10
1983	72.5	11,711,519	46.0	362	6,862,422	26.8	148	6,714,957	26.4	13

¹⁴ All details from the Wikipedia. UKIP in 2019 got just 22,817 votes. The Brexit Party did not stand against Tories

¹⁵ Liberal-Democrat or Alliance

Polls indicate that a Second Referendum would have rejected both May's deal and Boris Johnson's replacement. The narrow victory for Leave was helped by promised that the terms would be soft and easy, including the notorious promise of another 350 billion for the NHS. But it also turns out that 40% or 45% are absolutely committed to Brexit, regardless of what it may cost. That gave the Tories victory.

A new Labour leader offering the same Soft Leftism as Gordon Brown or Ed Miliband is unlikely to achieve anything. Probably they'd do worse than we've done in 2019.

Starmer has his options open. Accepting injustice to Palestinians to conciliate Jewish opinion is regrettable, but probably unavoidable. It is no worse that Roosevelt accepting the racial prejudices of the Southern Democrats in the 1930s, to get the New Deal voted into law.

A theoretical willingness to be part of a global nuclear holocaust is also a price worth paying to win elections.

We'd be wrecked regardless, so losing Corbyn's admirable idealism is acceptable.

But Starmer would be foolish if he went soft about imposing social justice on the rich 1% who have grabbed so much from the 1980s.

He should call it Feed-the-Rich. Make clear than the promise of the world as a global comfortable suburbia was always false. That the Tories never did want a world fit for 'White-Van-Man', and have not delivered it.

Make it clear that the targets are not the 'Next Nine', the people in the richest 10% but not the richest 1%. Who are in much the same position as they were before Thatcher, but facing a much nastier and more dangerous Britain.

And be aware that Corbyn restored Labour's popularity when Blair's attempt at New Labour ran into the sands. That it was only Brexit that derailed him.

New Labour lost Scotland. Overall voting for Labour looks much better if you look just at votes cast in England. Corbyn's Labour got more votes even in 2019 than pre-



Hague in 2013



Duncan Smith in 2020



Michael Howard in 2018

Corbyn Labour had got since Blair's first win in 1997. A better percentage of the vote than any since Blair's third victory in 2005.

It is correct to look just at England, because Labour in Scotland declined massively in 2015. The Scottish Nationalists jumped from 19.9% to 50%. From 6 seats at Westminster to 56. Labour slumped from 40% to 23.4%, and lost 40 of its 41 seats.¹⁶

Blair's 1997 victory was based on a promise of real change. A promise that was not delivered, and his vote slumped. But so did the Tory vote – people by then had lost faith in them. Total voting slumped, and he won in 2001 and 2005 almost by default.¹⁷

Scottish voters saw that a Scotland free of England might return to the moderate Welfarism and Mixed Economy that is normal in Continental Europe. The system that actually won the Cold War:¹⁸ all the New Right did was sound militant and then abandon their doctrine to stave off an economic crash in the half-forgotten crisis of 1987.

You get the same picture if you look at the actual voting in the seats Labour lost. In Scotland, the Scottish Nationalists returned. In England, the fall in the Labour vote was always much larger than the Tory gain. And both shifts were more drastic in constituencies that were stronger for Brexit. I've got a detailed analysis for several seats posted on the web, for those who want to check in detail.¹⁹ And the broad outlines at the end of this article.

While Blair was in government, the Tories made three unexpectedly bad choices of leader. William Hague, Iain Duncan Smith and Michael Howard. Creeps I am delighted to be able to insult as The Three Baldies.

Those three were unpleasant and unpopular. The Tory voters lost in 1997 mostly did not return in 2001 or 2005.

Note that Blair in those years was very useful to the rich elite, keeping most of the Labour Party inert. Supportive of the disastrous invasion of Iraq.

The possibility that various greedy individuals and cliques manipulated things is not absurd. Certainly, my recollection is that the media was nothing like as hostile to Labour as it usually is.

Victory to Labour's Timid Tendency?

If Starmer turns out to be a Blairite at heart, he is likely to face a major left-wing breakaway. Face a party of

16 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:General_elections_in_Scotland_to_the_Parliament_of_the_United_Kingdom

17 All figures from the Wiki, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:General_elections_in_England_to_the_Parliament_of_the_United_Kingdom. It does not show separate English data before 1983. And in 1983 and 1987, the Liberal-Democrats were still the Liberal / Social Democrat alliance.

18 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/the-mixed-economy-won-the-cold-war/>

19 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/editorials-from-labour-affairs/the-brexit-defeat/labours-lost-seats-causes/>

Untamed Socialists of the sort that has emerged in much of Western Europe.

Such a move would be harder, unless Britain's grossly unfair first-past-the-post system gets reformed, which will be hard given the parliamentary majority of those getting the unfair benefits. But it could easily happen. Plenty of Hard Leftists would be happy with just a larger audience, even with no real hope of power.

Starmer will also face newspapers and news channels dominated by right-wing owners. People who mostly pay no UK taxes. And who help parties with 'business-friendly' attitudes with scares about Communism.

In his case, some loose Trotskyist connections when he was much younger, which *Private Eye* has drawn attention to. *Private Eye* is a magazine for people who hate the Establishment, but are terrified of all possible alternatives. Not just Communism, but also serious Democratic Socialism.

My own answer on Communism is that the various Leninist movements changed the culture in societies that needed it. Changed the whole structure of the economy and the society in ways that most people do not understand.²⁰

For Russia, I can produce an unexpected witness – Alexander Solzhenitsyn. I've been reading his *Red Wheel* as it gets translated into English. To my surprise, he has contempt for absolutely everyone who might have been an alternative to Lenin and Stalin.

Solzhenitsyn's original version of *The First Circle* is now available, in place of the self-censored version he tried to get published in the Soviet Union in 1968. There he seems to see the revolution that overthrew the Tsar as a hopeful movement subverted by a wicked Bolshevik coup. But his researches since then may have undermined that view. The Constitutional Democrats (Kadets) are weak fools. Kerensky, leader of the relatively moderate Social-Revolutionaries, is a vain posturer.

I've been told by someone who read it in French translation that the final parts of *The Red Wheel* continues this theme, with Lenin's arrival.²¹ My French is too poor for serious reading, so I await with interest the English version.

Solzhenitsyn's original plan was to carry through till 1922. But his published works get no further than April 1917. Maybe he disliked where his own work was leading him.

For People's China, which now reasserts its Leninist roots, a very smart British writer said in 1950 that Mao as China's ruler would be out to change the *culture*.²² And Mao succeeded in making a fair copy of Stalin's Soviet Union. He tripled the economy, doubled the population and in the 1960s got death-rates down way below the poor-country norm for the era. Even in the crisis after the failed Great Leap Forward, death-rates were no worse than average for many poor countries. Official UN figures show this.²³

20 <https://gwydionwilliams.com/history-and-philosophy/the-left-redefined-the-normal/>

21 An account of the famous Sealed Train appeared many years ago, as the final section of *Lenin in Zurich*.

22 *Mao Tse-tung: Ruler of Red China*, by Robert Payne. 1950. Republished in 2014.

23 Go to <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=PopDiv&f=variab> leID%3A65#PopDiv and apply suitable filters

A number of books written to 'prove' that Mao failed all ignore this and much other evidence of solid achievement. They don't say why they think that the data is wrong: they simply say nothing about the off-message facts.

Jung Chang in her bitterness against Mao is being true to her heritage as granddaughter of a Chinese warlord.²⁴ A surprising number of Chinese critics of Mao are descended from the sort of people who made a complete mess of running China before 1949.

The media have convinced many Westerners that Mao is guilty of tens of millions of deaths, but this is nonsense. Had a miracle happened and China got a nice liberal government like in India, death rates would on average have stayed high. Millions of ordinary Chinese had longer better lives thanks to Mao.²⁵

Mao's work has also lasted better than that of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. Multi-party democracy has delivered power to Hindu extremism. Mr Modi gets blamed personally, but I suspect he is a moderating force at the head of a much wider right-wing movement.

Modi flourishes at the same time as Trump in the USA, Illiberal Democracy in Eastern Europe, Islamic Populism in Turkey and Hard-Line Islam elsewhere. Very different ideas, but flourishing thanks to liberal selfishness and neglect of ordinary people.

Mao left behind a China that Deng could then open to foreign investors and raise up as a world centre of manufacturing. Before that, and sensibly fearing it, Mao attempted something much more radical in his Cultural Revolution. This got reversed after his death: but the popular-democratic aims were things many would wish to see done, by less drastic methods.

Deng in using capitalism to cure backwardness was more of an orthodox Marxist than Mao was.

So too is Xi. Private commerce is a means to an end, not the final goal.

In the West, we still have the Mixed Economy created in the 1940s. But now fine-tuned to favour the rich.

In the West, the culture has been reformed massively from the 1950s. Done without much violence, but the possibility of violence was always there.

Violence was actually expressed by Irish Republicanism in Northern Ireland, and their political wing now share power in government. And have become the single strongest party in the Irish Republic. They can hope to achieve Irish Unity in the next couple of decades: perhaps much sooner with the chaos over Brexit.

Claiming that '*violence does not work*' sounds plausible, only if you carefully avoid looking at all the cases when it *did* work for those who began it. Or who handled it best - there are always disagreement about who began what.

The British Empire is the most dramatic case. The Empire is gone, but English is the 'hub culture' for a very diverse world.

Violence and terrorism by Irish Republicanism has always had powerful sympathisers in the USA. So a sycophantic media mostly does not talk about it in the same terms as other violence and terrorism.

²⁴ General Xue Zhi-heng – see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Swans.

²⁵ <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwiliams/How-Mao-Saved-Vast-Numbers-of-Chinese-Lives>

Beyond Ireland, most of the radical changes in the second half of the 20th century happened when the ruling class feared they'd lose the Cold War. Class barriers became more flexible, and lots of snobbish rules were abandoned. All sorts of concessions were made to women, and to those previously considered Inferior Races. Changes happened that might otherwise not have happened.

The concessions extended to gays and lesbians, which was more radical than Leninism ever intended. China softened its previous intolerance in the 1980s, amidst a general flood of Western values.

Right-wingers might say '*over my dead body*'. Leninists might answer '*yes, that's what we had in mind*'. And at that point, moderates summoned up the courage to take on the right-wingers and make moderate reforms.

Liberals believe in moderation in all things - **including social justice**. But when liberals see their comfortable privileges at risk, almost anything is possible.

European Communism had some justification up to the 1950s. And little thereafter, when most of their sensible demands became plausible as policies for Democratic Socialists. When we might have had Workers Control, and also secured more social justice through an incomes policy.

European communism carried on hoping for total victory with the collapse of 'capitalism', up until their own system collapsed. The chance to move the Mixed Economy further towards socialism was opposed and was lost.

The main alternative on the left were foolish Trotskyists, too soft for real revolution and too militant for successful reformism.

Between them, they paved the way for Thatcher. As super-militants, they undermined sensible Labour Party policies.

But now the young have a new enthusiasm for a Mixed Economy with more socialism.

Clearly there is also old-fashioned racism and male-chauvinism among the lost Labour voters. In my own constituency, Coventry North West, a young black lady called Taiwo Owatemi only just won. She got some 6,000 votes less than white and elderly Geoffrey Robinson, an excellent but conventional MP who had stepped down after 43 years.²⁶ Here, the Brexit vote was actually more than in 2017, but the Tory got an extra 2,500 votes. Ex-Labour racists, maybe: but should we throw away all of our principles in the hope of keeping such votes?

For some Labour-to-Tory switch-voters, the main issue was that a Tory victory meant Brexit for certain, while Labour leaned toward Remain.

Taiwo Owatemi got more votes than Geoffrey Robinson got in 2015. Marginally fewer than he got in 2010, and a thousand fewer than he got in 2005.

Geoffrey Robinson in 2017 got by far his biggest vote since 1997, when Tony Blair promised much that he never delivered. Blair also delivered much that no one had expected, including an unprecedented state funeral for

²⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coventry_North_West_\(UK_Parliament_constituency\)#Elections_in_the_2010s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coventry_North_West_(UK_Parliament_constituency)#Elections_in_the_2010s)

Thatcher and a horrible war in Iraq.

Tories in the bad atmosphere created by Brexit had success in massaging old-fashioned racism and male-chauvinism. And it is just massaging. They are the party of business, which now lives in a multi-ethnic world with penalties for serious racism. With women increasingly less unequal, and pushing strongly for more. So they have never given such voters more than a few crumbs. Treated them like idiots, and it is yet to be shown that they are mistaken.

Someone with a voice powerful enough to be heard nationally should point this out. Say that while Tories always cater to racists and sexists, they always cheat them. Prefer militant young females, and those who'd not be classed as part of the White Race.

Labour is also not dependent on racists and sexists. Catering to them is not even real pragmatism, since Tories will generally do it better.

Yes, some former Labour voters switched to Tory, or failed to vote. But Labour also picked up many young people who failed to vote before. And by 2024, the expected date for the next General Election, many more young people will have the vote.

Those young people would probably not vote for a Labour Party that was a lukewarm copy of Tory policies. If Labour is foolish enough to reject Corbynite radicalism, it will gain a few votes from the Timid Centre. But lose far more from people who *know* that many things are seriously wrong.

Labour lost in 2019, because about 45% of the population wanted Brexit no matter what the cost. For them, what had gone wrong since the relatively pleasant 1960s was Immigration and 'Brussels Bureaucrats'.

Some of these voted Tory, who would not normally do so. Some would not, but did not vote Labour. It all added up.

Brexit would probably have lost had its opponents rallied behind the demand for a Second Referendum. It would have been a just demand. The original vote was won on the false promise that Brexit would be soft and easy. That it would release vast sums to spend on the NHS.

The vote was won with 51.9%, which I'd guess to be a combination of 45% Brexit-at-any-cost and 7% 'Soft Brexit'. Polls indicated that a second vote would have chosen 'Remain'.²⁷ But sadly, there was never a clear parliamentary majority to ask the people if they were still set on Brexit. Ask if they were confident now that the rest of Europe had held firm and refused to let Britain have the benefits without the cost.

Quitting on the terms accepted by Johnson is likely to be very nasty. Likewise those offered by May. So I am very glad that Labour repeatedly refused to abstain and let either deal be carried through. It certainly got us mauled in 2019. But from now on, the guilt will be entirely Tory.

And the same applies to Covid-19. Boris Johnson delayed by several critical days or weeks before applying the right controls. Controls that Labour called for earlier.

²⁷ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_on_the_United_Kingdom%27s_membership_of_the_European_Union_\(2016%E2%80%93present\)#Remain/leave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_on_the_United_Kingdom%27s_membership_of_the_European_Union_(2016%E2%80%93present)#Remain/leave)

And the backwash from Brexit may not be so bad in the long run. With Britain gone, the European Union might get more serious about integration and welfare policies. I am 69 years old and may not live to see it, but I like to think long-term and for the general welfare. Anything else I would find unbearably squalid.

I am also sad that Labour failed to draw the correct lesson from the Crisis of 2008. The Tories said it was down to excessive government spending. Labour was weak in saying that it was speculators. Went along with policies of Austerity for most people and a vast bail-out of banks that should have been allowed to collapse. The gibberish name 'Quantitative Easing' was used, but it was a bail-out for rich speculators. The wealth of the rich was protected, with Obama doing just the same thing in the USA. So the Tories revived and Labour slumped in 2010 and 2015.

2015 also saw the collapse of the Liberal-Democrats. Foolishly, they had not demanded a fairer voting system after 2010, when it would have been impossible to form a government without them. They agreed to a referendum on a possible reform, and lost it. Lost most of their voters and seats in 2015, and have not really recovered since. They picked up some dedicated Remainer votes, but still less voters than before they made themselves doormats to Tory policies in 2010-15 coalition.

My Generation and the New Generation

It is true enough that some former Labour voters refused to vote for Corbyn regardless of Brexit. But that is mostly the elderly.

Born in 1950, I am part of the Baby Boomer generation.

More accurately, the wave of young people often led by War Babies, those born from 1939 to 1945. Baby Boomers are commonly defined as 1946 to 1964. But the difference in outlook is minimal.

All four members of The Beatles were War Babies, as was Mick Jagger. Slightly older than the rest of us, and so were the leaders in thought and music.

Here, I am mostly talking about Thought. But also pop music as reflecting thought, and also helping to create it.

The faults and the successes of my own generation.

Most Baby Boomers opted for Thatcherism, and are now offended by the modern world they helped create.

My generation: and I remember well that **a majority of them were only interested in radicalism when it served their own selfish interests.**

They were greedy then. And as they aged, they have got worse.

Rebels against The System even when they became The System. It does not make for good government, as the current Covus-19 crisis is vividly showing.

The triumph of the Baby Boomers was a cultural liberation. But a liberation that also weakened or destroyed the security and welfare of the less fortunate.

People born since the 1960s may not have heard of a pop group called *The Who* – though that generation as a whole were highly creative, and their influence lingers.

Songs from *The Who* were catchy, but even at the time I had a low opinion of them. Saw them as silly little whiners. Much worse than most of the whining selfish

majority of a generation whose commitment to others was weak.

Even *The Beatles*, far more positive than most, broke with tradition in simply ignoring requests for free charity work that previous musical successes had respected.

Later bands were much more negative. *The Who* are the worst case known to me.

And the 1965 hit song *My Generation* is the one that most offends me now.

At the time, my late mother got very offended by the line '**Why don't you all fade away**'. Young people with no gratitude for the older generation who had made an excellent world for them. A world better than any generation had inherited before them.

And in many ways better than what generations after the Baby Boomers would get. When they got older and more prosperous, a majority of Baby Boomers began seeing the taxes that had funded their comfortable upbringing as an intolerable burden. And twisted logic to deny the obvious fact that Social Welfare had been a grand success.

This was helped by most of the left whining about what was still imperfect. Not mentioning how much good had been done.

Good done by people who were neither Trotskyists nor Anarchists nor post-Stalin pro-Moscow Communists.

Socialist successes were bad-mouthed by people with few positive achievements. People whose rise coincides remarkably with the decline of socialist prestige and power.

I never forgot my mother's words. This and other things she said come out as quite as relevant as the published work of my father Raymond Williams. Who indeed would almost certainly not have become the productive and successful man he was without my mother's support. Indeed, in the *Forward to Culture and Society*, he says she was "virtually the joint author". It is a pity he did not make her such: she always hesitant about asserting herself. I'd suppose that in today's changed world, even much less deserving wives or other partners do get listed.

And re-checking details of *My Generation*, I learn that the song was sparked at a minor exercise of authority by the Queen Mother. She allegedly had a Who member's 1935 Packard hearse towed off a street in Belgravia because she was offended by the sight of it.²⁸

Whatever her faults, the widowed wife of George 6th did show real concern for those less fortunate than herself. Something the new wave of pop stars seldom bothered with. And though her appearance in a film called *The King's Speech* may bend history a little, I think the full picture would be even better.

Reading and checking the full lyrics of *My Generation*, I was struck by a line I had forgotten: '*I hope I die before I get old*'. Not something they or their kind stuck to, when they really did get old.²⁹ Keith Moon killed himself with drugs and alcohol in 1978: one of a string of premature deaths within a self-indulgent self-destructive culture. But the others lasted into the 21st century, with two of them still alive.³⁰

28 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Generation

29 <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/who/mygeneration.html>

30 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_Who_band_members

Paul McCartney showed a much more serious and human sentiment, writing '*Will you still need me / Will you still feed me / When I'm sixty-four?*' when in his mid-20s.³¹ He is still going strong at 77.

The elderly mostly vote Tory. They remain well-fed.

They are also much more likely to vote.

Younger people have often been persuaded that it is a waste of time voting. And are very puzzled to find themselves neglected.

And what next?

Millions of young people voted Labour, who had not voted before. And they are the future.

The world's future.

The future for Labour, only if Starmer quietly accepts that Corbyn was right about social justice and inequality.

If Labour does not scuttle back to the policies of weak acceptance of injustice that led to a falling-away in 2001 and 2005, followed by defeat in 2010 and 2015.

Blair won his second and third election victories almost by default. Turnout slumped dramatically, from 71% to 59% and 61%. The Tories before Cameron had a string of unpopular and unimpressive leaders: the men I called The Three Baldies. They tried to tap into right-wing Populism, but were not convincing as demagogues.

Cameron managed to present himself as sensible and safe, though he was neither. But Boris Johnson represents a Populism that can win voters not tied to the classical left-right spectrum.

In the USA, polls for the 2016 election showed that Bernie Sanders had a better chance of beating Trump than Hilary Clinton did. Hilary actually got more votes than Trump, but lost because these were translated into Electoral College votes that favoured small and mostly right-wing US states. But there were many discontented voters whose first choice was socialist Bernie Sanders, but whose second choice was anti-Establishment Trump.

The Saunders-to-Trump voters should have been asked, '*do you really think that a very rich man is going to look after the poor and ordinary, rather than look after his own sort?*' Because that is what he has mostly done.

Yet people still get fooled. We'd probably get the same in Britain, if Starmer rejects Corbyn and moves back to re-gather elderly unhappy voters. No doubt we would win some. But we would lose enormous numbers of young people who want something different. Labour would slump again.

Elections are a funny business. Labour won big in 1945 and lost in the elections of 1950 and 1951. But Labour got a majority of the votes in both those elections, and far more than they got in 1945.

What also happened was that the Tory vote recovered: from under 9 million in 1945 to 12.5 million in 1950 and 13.7 million in 1951. Several million voters must have wanted some change in 1945, or at least did not fear a Labour government. By 1950 they perhaps felt that change had gone far enough. And the Tories then, and up until Thatcher, respected the main changes Labour had made.

But the returned Tory voters did not in fact mean a Tory

31 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/When_I%27m_Sixty-Four

majority. Attlee in 1951 got over 200,000 more votes than Churchill. But the oddity of constituency boundaries meant that Churchill got the parliamentary majority.³²

Labour in government had agreed to a redrawing of constituency boundaries that satisfied some abstract notions of justice, but had the predictable effect of allowing the Tories to win more seats with less votes. Playing things much too clean, which the Tories never would.

Tories also know that the media are often deluded, and commonly corrupt. Will howl about 'bias' when the bias is not as strongly in their favour as they would like. Managed to tame the BBC that way.

Much louder protests by the left are needed, tapping into the large mass of discontented.

Selective Horror About Anti-Semitism

When the row about Labour anti-Semitism surfaced, I immediately checked for what I suspected was the weak point. My own experience told me that Labour activists would often be hostile to Zionism, but not to Jews as such.

Even if you thought that all anti-Zionism was disguised anti-Semitism, there was still little difference between the major parties.

I tried illustrating this by imaging some tabloid using a misleading headline:

"Tunbridge Wells has a Drugs and Murder Problem"

For those not familiar with Britain, Tunbridge Wells is famous as an archetype of respectable English identity. It is not free of either murder or drug abuse – but it has *less* of a problem than the British average. For that matter, Britain is by no means bad compared to other advanced Western states. We do not have the mass shootings or massive opioid epidemic of the USA.

I detailed how it was unfair to pick on Labour, when hostility to Jews existed in all parties. And when it was not distinct from other sorts of communal hatred. Chinese get less than most, most of the time. But Chinese who have not lived there for years are now being blamed for Covid-19.³³

I felt Labour should emphasise that Labour was being falsely accused of having more anti-Jewish feeling than other parties. And it was no accident that this happened when Labour had a leader sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

I wrote about this in the magazine *Labour Affairs* back in May 2015.³⁴

Sadly, I seem to have been classified as a Person of No Importance, if I am noticed at all. A defence that might have made a massive difference was never used by anyone else, as far as I know.

The issue remains. And I'd suggest that Labour should commission *YouGov* or some other respected and impartial

32 [https://en.wikipedia.org/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1951_United_Kingdom_general_election)

wiki/1951_United_Kingdom_general_election

33 <https://thebolditalic.com/covid-19-is-bringing-out-deep-rooted-racism-in-the-bay-area-6829dce987f8>

34 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/2018-05-magazine/2018-05-fewer-anti-semites-in-labour-than-tories/>

agency to redo the survey. And also to produce separate figures for racial and religious groups within the political parties.

My expectation would be that most of the Labour Party members suspicious about Jews as such would be Muslims. But foolish prejudices are also found among some people of African or Afro-Caribbean origin. The minorities that the Tories were happy to pick on before they became so numerous that their votes were needed. Minorities that Labour helped integrate into the society, risking and sometimes losing its supporters among the traditional working class.

The poet Auden saw it nicely when he said

'Those to whom evil is done
'Do evil in return.'

That was actually said about Germans supporting the Nazis, which may upset some people. And those people need to be upset: jolted out of blind prejudice. Germany did evil because of the massive injustices done to them after World War One.

Britain might have been as bad and even as hostile to Jews had Britain been an abused loser after a German victory. And in real history, Britain had been in alliance with Tsarist Russia despite its vicious anti-Semitism. And despite being victors, the London *Times* was willing to believe the Protocols of the Elders of Zion until it was proven plagiarised from a French denunciation of Napoleon the Third.³⁵

In World War Two, the Allies refused to bomb the railway lines leading to the death camps. Bombing the camps themselves might have killed the victims, but anything that slowed the shipment of Jews and others to specialised killing centres would have helped.

Churchill also decided to entirely neglect the Bengal famine of 1943.³⁶

"Churchill was quoted as blaming the famine on the fact Indians were 'breeding like rabbits', and asking how, if the shortages were so bad, Mahatma Gandhi was still alive."³⁷

This reminds me of the Holocaust-deniers who cast doubt by pointing to various survivors. By that same logic, perhaps no one drowned on the *Titanic*.

Hostility to Jews is foolish and sometimes evil. But it is not separate from general prejudice and general suffering. And to pretend otherwise is not even intelligent selfishness. The media will go along with the pretence that prejudice against high-status people is quite different from prejudice against the unwanted and marginal. But that will only increase the resentment and possibility of violence. I've explained elsewhere why I have a dismal expectation that Zionism's hard-line will in the long run prove suicidal.³⁸

If you want the hard facts about resentment specifically against Jews, one sample is available free in a PDF

35 See 'Antisemitism in the London Times': https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/hitler-the-13th-chancellor/#_Toc515264103

36 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_famine_of_1943

37 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/04/churchill-policies-blamed-1943-bengal-famine-study-190401155922122.html>

38 <https://gwydionwilliams.com/048-anti-semitism-and-zionism/zionisms-suicidal-militancy/>

document called *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain: A study of attitudes towards Jews and Israel*, by L. Daniel Staetsky.³⁹ If you're in a hurry, page 45 has the key facts.

Unsurprisingly, Muslims have the strongest feelings.

In Britain as a whole, there is more prejudice against Muslims, non-Muslim Asians and people of African or Afro-Caribbean origin. Some against East Asians. And of course those groups are often very prejudiced against each other. Ordinary Chinese do not like Black Africans living in China, though they will accept high-spending foreign tourists.

It is also a fact that US and European prejudices were reduced when we had a smooth-running Mixed Economy. That they increased as inequality and unemployment grew. Jews are just one of many possible targets.

Real Cures for Anti-Semitism

The basic cure for prejudice and hatred is to return to the milder inequality and greater economic security that the West had before following the delusions of Reagan and Thatcher.

But there are other things that could be done about the specific prejudice against Jews. I had some ideas for useful media projects. I believe they could make a difference, if people with the money and professional skills would take and interest:

1. **The True History of the Protocols of Zion.** I've given the basic story as part of a wider study in Issue 30 of *Problems* magazine: *Hitler – the 13th Chancellor*.

It starts with a man called John Robison, who invented the siren and also worked with James Watt on an early and impractical steam car.⁴⁰ Who knew Adam Smith. And who was judged crazy when he produced a conspiracy theory about the French Revolution being caused by Freemasons – Jews were of no interest to him.

Variations that included Jews swiftly followed. Most of them demented and unimpressive.

Most of what raises the *Protocols* above the usual right-wing trash was stolen by an unknown plagiarist from the work of a depressed French radical called Maurice Joly. A man who 14 years later committed suicide.

Joly was not concerned about what Jews might be doing. But his bitter denunciation of the corrupt liberalism of Napoleon the Third's Empire include insights into both liberal failings and newly-developed methods of social control. Stuff that you do find a few Jews involved in, but most of those involved are not Jews. Stuff that most Jews are not involved in, and some have been dedicated opponents of. But when people get hooked on hatred, critical thought is lost. Some Jews are found: it must all be a Jewish plot.

2. **Haym Salomon and the making of the USA.** This associate of the Rothschilds played a large and heroic role, and is largely forgotten.⁴¹ An authentic conspiracy, but one whom most of the world would approve of.

Foreigners might wonder if Britons might blame Jews for losing their first Empire. Myself, I'm sure that

39 https://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR.2017.Antisemitism_in_contemporary_Great_Britain.pdf

40 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Robison_\(physicist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Robison_(physicist))

41 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haym_Salomon

would be too crackpot even for the Far Right. Most Britons followed Edmund Burke in seeing the American Revolution as justified. A defeat that helped moderate reform in Britain.

Robert Graves's *Sergeant Lamb* novels are exceptional in being sympathetic to those Britons who fought against US independence. There is also Bernard Cornwell's *The Fort*, which is a neutral description of a minor incident in that war. Neutral apart from presenting the famous Paul Revere as a sham hero.

3. **The Rothschilds – a faded legacy.** How it is decades since they counted for much in International Finance. And were never important on the scale of the Medici and similar true powerhouses.

4. **The Jewish Mother of Fascism.** The remarkable life of Margherita Sarfatti, who may have been the brains behind Mussolini's new politics. The story could include other Italian Jewish Fascists, most of whom fled or perished.

5. **The Bronsteins of Petrograd.** A soap-opera beginning in 1914, but set mostly in 1917. An extended Jewish family with the same surname as Trotsky, but not related to him.

Have the various family members of both sexes spread across most of the politics of the time – Bolshevik, the pro-war and anti-war Menshevik, Trotsky's own small faction, Zionists, Bundists and Liberals.

Bundists in particular are worth remembering. Mocked as 'Zionists with sea-sickness', they had the sensible idea of strongly asserting Jewish identity within the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic states where most Jews then lived. And favoured Yiddish rather than a revival of Hebrew.

Bundists understandable vanished as a major movement after the mass slaughter of Jews in the places where they had tried to co-exist. But they are worth remembering.

As an extra, a young teenage girl among the rival Bronsteins could be friends with another young Jew called Alisa Rosenbaum, later famous as right-wing libertarian Ayn Rand. And fascinatingly, one of her closest friends was Vladimir Nabokov's younger sister. Have the little Bronstein encounter the man himself, then aged 18. Have her not like the way he looked at her.

Nabokov, incidentally, had synesthesia.⁴² A muddling of the senses that is sometimes linked to high creativity. His account of his odd visions in his autobiography I found fascinating, while *Lolita* I found simply debased. A synesthetic vision should make good television, if anyone dares go beyond the usual conventional negativity that now dominates drama.

But politics should be the backbone of such a drama. It should be emphasised that there were not overall many Jewish Bolsheviks before the October Revolution, even though there were a lot of Jews among the leaders.

One estimate is that at the start of 1917 there were 300,000 Zionists in Russia, 34,000 Bundists, and less than 1000 in Lenin's faction⁴³ The largest faction

42 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Nabokov#Synesthesia

43 *Genius and Anxiety: How Jews Changed the World, 1847-1947*, by Norman Lebrecht. Page 263.

within Russian Marxism, with everyone using the term Social-Democrat till Bolsheviks revived the old term ‘Communist’ in 1918.

Rather more Jews supported the Mensheviks, who opposed the October Revolution. And when it came to voting, most Jews supported Russian liberalism.⁴⁴

“The Bolsheviks had very little support among the Jewish population, possibly the lowest amount of any of the multiple parties vying for support ‘on the Jewish street.’... More Jews, though hardly a great number, supported the Mensheviks...

“The Jewish population broadly rejected socialism in any guise, Jewish or not, as the solution to the problems of the Jews in Russia.

“Far more Jews, though still a minority, supported the liberal party known as the Kadets (the acronym for the Constitutional Democrats).⁴⁵

The Kadets had not always been friendly to Jews. The majority of Jews seem to have voted for independent liberal Jewish parties.

In the overall vote for a Constituent Assembly, the Socialist-Revolutionaries got 37.61. The Bolsheviks got 23.26. The Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary Party and its allies got 12.68. Mensheviks 3.02%.⁴⁶

The Kadets, the main force of Russian liberalism, got a mere 4.58%. The most significant defender of the Old Order, the All-Russian Union of Landowners and Farmers, got a derisory 0.5%: less than a quarter of a million votes.

The population of the Russian Empire voted

44 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13501670903016316>

45 <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/247752/why-did-russian-jews-support-the-bolshevik-revolution>

46 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1917_Russian_Constituent_Assembly_election

Austerity and Brexit was not a major issue.⁴⁹

In many cases Labour got more votes in 2019 than they had in 2015. But in 2019, most of the Brexit vote went to the Tories.

Seats	Leave	Remain	Tory Gain (%)	Labour Loss	2017 gain from 2015	Special Factors
Ashfield	70.5%		-2.4	18.1	1.6	“Ashfield Independents” 2nd
Barrow and Furness	57.3%		4.8	8.2	5.2	
Bassetlaw	68.3%		11.9	24.9	3.9	No UKIP / Brexit in 2017
Birmingham Northfield	61.8%		3.6	10.7	11.6	
Bishop Auckland	60.9%		6.8	12.1	6.7	
Blackpool South	67.8%		6.5	12.0	8.5	
Blyth Valley	60.5%		5.8	15.0	9.6	
Bolsover	70.4%		6.9	16.0	0.7	
Bolton North East	58.1%		3.2	6.1	7.7	
Bridgend	50.3%		3.3	10.3	13.6	
Burnley	66.6%		9.4	9.9	9.1	
Bury North	53.7%		1.8	7.6	12.5	

49 Voting percentages from the Wikipedia entry for the seat.

overwhelmingly for some sort of socialism. And to judge by the confusion and failure of other revolutions, probably only Lenin setting up a dictatorial regime could have actually delivered it. So no one on the left need apologise for finding positives in the Soviet past.

Russia’s pro-Western liberals in 1917 got much the same as modern Russian liberals get after their brief popularity during Yeltsin’s rule. The Western media hype them, but the main opposition to Putin is and always has been the revived Russian Communists.⁴⁷

Back in 1917, Jewish national lists got 1.25%: probably a majority of voters among the Tsarist Empire’s Jewish minority. Most of them then tried to be loyal Soviet citizens, but got treated with suspicion after 1947 when many of them also went beyond Soviet policy in supporting Israel.

These facts are little known even among those who take a strong interest in politics. Popularising them in the easy form of a dramatic soap-opera has to do some good.

You don’t cure Bad Thinking by having the media and politicians gang up on offenders and scream **Bad, Bad, Bad**. You do it by supposing that most of them are normal humans being, with mixed motives but able to be reached by arguments. And particularly by dramas that are both entertaining and broadly factual.

Appendix – Details of Labour Losses

Below is the full list of seats lost by Labour in the 2019 general election, as given by ‘Labour List’.⁴⁸ I added the gains and losses from 2017. Also Labour gains compared to 2015, when the Labour Moderates were not challenging

47 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_the_Russian_Federation#Popular_support_and_electoral_results

48 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_the_Russian_Federation#Popular_support_and_electoral_results

Bury South	54.5%		2.3	10.2	8.2	
Clwyd South	59.9%		5.6	9.4	13.5	
Coatbridge		61.2%	-3.6	7.6	8.7	Scottish Nationalist gain
Colne Valley	50.1%		2.2	7.7	12.8	
Crewe and Nantwich	60.3%		6.1	9.7	9.4	
Darlington	58.1%		4.8	10.1	7.7	
Delyn	54.4%		2.2	10.8	11.6	
Derby North	54.3%		0.8	8.7	11.9	
Dewsbury	57.2%		1.3	7.3	9.2	
Don Valley	68.5%		1.4	14.8	6.8	Caroline Flint. Anti-Corbyn and voted Leave. ⁵⁰
Dudley North	71.4%		16.6	14.9	4.7	Previous MP quit Labour
Durham North West	55.1%		7.5	13.3	6.0	
East Lothian		64.6%	-6.6	3.1	5.5	Scottish Nationalist gain
Gedling	56.3%		2.6	7.8	9.6	
Glasgow North East		59.3%	-2.4	3.5	9.2	Scottish Nationalist gain
Great Grimsby	71.5%		12.7	16.7	9.6	
Heywood and Middleton	62.4%		5.1	11.6	10.2	
High Peak	50.6%		0.5	4.9	14.4	
Hyndburn	65.8%		8.9	11.8	11.2	
Ipswich	56.5%		4.6	8.1	10.3	
Keighley	53.3%		2.0	2.6	8.4	
Kensington		68.8%	-3.9	4.3	11.1	Liberal-Democrat vote doubled
Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath		56.7%	-3.2	4.2	3.5	Scottish Nationalist gain
Leigh	63.3%		9.4	15.1	2.3	
Lincoln	57.4%		3.2	6.9	8.3	
Midlothian		62.1%	-3.7	6.7	6.2	Scottish Nationalist gain
Newcastle-under-Lyme	61.6%		4.4	12.3	9.8	
Penistone and Stocksbridge	60.7%		4.7	12.5	3.8	Previous MP quit Labour
Peterborough	61.3%		-0.1	6.7	12.5	Ignoring a 2019 by-election
Redcar	67.7%		12.8	18.1	11.6	
Rother Valley	66.7%		4.8	16.0	4.5	
Rutherglen and Hamilton West		62.4%	-4.5	3.0	2.3	Scottish Nationalist gain
Scunthorpe	68.7%		10.3	15.3	10.3	
Sedgefield	59.4%		8.4	17.1	6.2	
Stockton South	57.8%		3.8	7.4	11.5	
Stoke-on-Trent Central	64.9%		5.6	8.2	12.2	
Stoke-on-Trent North	72.1%		7.0	14.3	11.0	
Stroud		54.1%	2.0	4.9	9.3	
Vale of Clwyd	56.6%		2.3	8.7	11.9	
Wakefield	62.8%		2.3	9.9	9.4	
Warrington South	51.1%		1.3	6.1	9.3	
West Bromwich East	68.2%		8.5	16.7	7.8	
West Bromwich West	68.7%		10.9	12.5	4.7	

50 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caroline_Flint

Wolverhampton North East	67.7%		11.4	13.0	6.7	
Wolverhampton South West	54.4%		4.1	5.1	6.1	
Workington	61.0%		7.5	11.9	8.8	
Wrexham	57.6%		1.7	9.9	11.7	
Ynys Mon	50.9%		7.7	11.8	10.8	

You can find details of some of the seats where Labour got more votes when losing in 2019 than they had when winning in 2015 on my website, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/editorials-from-labour-affairs/the-brexit-defeat/labours-lost-seats-causes/>. Note that it was in part the Tories getting Brexit or UKIP votes:

Except in Scotland, the bigger the Leave vote, the better for the Tories and the worse for Labour. The table below is sorted by Leave vote.

Seats	Leave	Remain	Tory Gain (%)	Labour Loss	2017 gain from 2015	Special Factors
Stoke-on-Trent North	72.1%		7.0	14.3	11.0	
Great Grimsby	71.5%		12.7	16.7	9.6	
Dudley North	71.4%		16.6	14.9	4.7	Previous MP quit Labour
Ashfield	70.5%		-2.4	18.1	1.6	“Ashfield Independents” 2nd
Bolsover	70.4%		6.9	16.0	0.7	
Scunthorpe	68.7%		10.3	15.3	10.3	
West Bromwich West	68.7%		10.9	12.5	4.7	
Don Valley	68.5%		1.4	14.8	6.8	Caroline Flint, details above
Bassetlaw	68.3%		11.9	24.9	3.9	No UKIP / Brexit in 2017
West Bromwich East	68.2%		8.5	16.7	7.8	
Blackpool South	67.8%		6.5	12.0	8.5	
Redcar	67.7%		12.8	18.1	11.6	
Wolverhampton North East	67.7%		11.4	13.0	6.7	
Rother Valley	66.7%		4.8	16.0	4.5	
Burnley	66.6%		9.4	9.9	9.1	
Hyndburn	65.8%		8.9	11.8	11.2	
Stoke-on-Trent Central	64.9%		5.6	8.2	12.2	
Leigh	63.3%		9.4	15.1	2.3	
Wakefield	62.8%		2.3	9.9	9.4	
Heywood and Middleton	62.4%		5.1	11.6	10.2	
Birmingham Northfield	61.8%		3.6	10.7	11.6	
Newcastle-under-Lyme	61.6%		4.4	12.3	9.8	
Peterborough	61.3%		-0.1	6.7	12.5	Ignoring a 2019 by-election
Workington	61.0%		7.5	11.9	8.8	
Bishop Auckland	60.9%		6.8	12.1	6.7	
Penistone and Stocksbridge	60.7%		4.7	12.5	3.8	Previous MP quit Labour
Blyth Valley	60.5%		5.8	15.0	9.6	
Crewe and Nantwich	60.3%		6.1	9.7	9.4	
Clwyd South	59.9%		5.6	9.4	13.5	
Sedgefield	59.4%		8.4	17.1	6.2	
Bolton North East	58.1%		3.2	6.1	7.7	
Darlington	58.1%		4.8	10.1	7.7	
Stockton South	57.8%		3.8	7.4	11.5	
Wrexham	57.6%		1.7	9.9	11.7	
Lincoln	57.4%		3.2	6.9	8.3	

Barrow and Furness	57.3%		4.8	8.2	5.2	
Dewsbury	57.2%		1.3	7.3	9.2	
Vale of Clwyd	56.6%		2.3	8.7	11.9	
Ipswich	56.5%		4.6	8.1	10.3	
Gedling	56.3%		2.6	7.8	9.6	
Durham North West	55.1%		7.5	13.3	6.0	
Bury South	54.5%		2.3	10.2	8.2	
Delyn	54.4%		2.2	10.8	11.6	
Wolverhampton South West	54.4%		4.1	5.1	6.1	
Derby North	54.3%		0.8	8.7	11.9	
Bury North	53.7%		1.8	7.6	12.5	
Keighley	53.3%		2.0	2.6	8.4	
Warrington South	51.1%		1.3	6.1	9.3	
Ynys Mon	50.9%		7.7	11.8	10.8	
High Peak	50.6%		0.5	4.9	14.4	
Bridgend	50.3%		3.3	10.3	13.6	
Colne Valley	50.1%		2.2	7.7	12.8	
Stroud		54.1%	2.0	4.9	9.3	
Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath		56.7%	-3.2	4.2	3.5	Scottish Nationalist gain
Glasgow North East		59.3%	-2.4	3.5	9.2	Scottish Nationalist gain
Coatbridge		61.2%	-3.6	7.6	8.7	Scottish Nationalist gain
Midlothian		62.1%	-3.7	6.7	6.2	Scottish Nationalist gain
Rutherglen and Hamilton West		62.4%	-4.5	3.0	2.3	Scottish Nationalist gain
East Lothian		64.6%	-6.6	3.1	5.5	Scottish Nationalist gain
Kensington		68.8%	-3.9	4.3	11.1	Liberal-Democrat vote doubled

You get the same picture if you sort by the severity of Labour loss. And note this is just where Labour lost the seat.

Seats	Leave	Remain	Tory Gain (%)	Labour Loss	2017 gain from 2015	Special Factors
Bassetlaw	68.3%		11.9	24.9	3.9	No UKIP / Brexit in 2017
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Bolsover	70.4%		6.9	16.0	0.7	
Rother Valley	66.7%		4.8	16.0	4.5	
Scunthorpe	68.7%		10.3	15.3	10.3	
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Crewe and Nantwich	60.3%		6.1	9.7	9.4	
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Derby North	54.3%		0.8	8.7	11.9	
Vale of Clwyd	56.6%		2.3	8.7	11.9	
Barrow and Furness	57.3%		4.8	8.2	5.2	
Stoke-on-Trent Central	64.9%		5.6	8.2	12.2	
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East Lothian		64.6%	-6.6	3.1	5.5	Scottish Nationalist gain
Rutherglen and Hamilton West		62.4%	-4.5	3.0	2.3	Scottish Nationalist gain
Keighley	53.3%		2.0	2.6	8.4	

Blogs on Covid-19

by Gwydion M. Williams

On Quora, I have a blog on many topics. And have been saying things about the Covid-19 crisis from early on:

China Viruses - Covid-19 and 'Wuhan-400'.

Feb 15th, <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/China-Viruses-Covid-19-and-Wuhan-400>.

I explained that it wasn't anything like the story in the American thriller *The Edge of Darkness*. But pointed out that the outbreak happened at an ideal time and place for someone hoping to damage China without causing large numbers of deaths,

Rumours, Information, and Covid-19

Feb 21st, <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Rumours-Information-and-Covid-19>.

This was about why China had not found it easy to contain the virus.

Back on January 20th, I did another blog called **Russian Roulette Quite Often Safe?** (<https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Russian-Roulette-Quite-Often-Safe>). I'd not heard of the virus at the time. It was a point about foolish attitudes to climate change. How Western governments were taking too many risks.

But my next blog was about the failure of the wider world to contain the virus:

Fear of Covus-19

Feb 29th, <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Fear-of-Covus-19>.

I said that I now saw myself at risk. That Boris Johnson was being too slow to act. And that Trump was much worse.

As it happened, much of March was wasted. Lives are now being lost that might have been saved by more prompt action,

Covid-19: Punishing the Innocent

March 14th, <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Covid-19-Punishing-the-Innocent>

Here, I praised the government of the Irish Republic for having acted, and complained that Britain had not yet done a lockdown.

Trump bungles and tries to shift the blame

March 20th, <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Trump-bungles-and-tries-to-shift-the-blame>.

I noted that Trump was still too slow, and keen to blame the Chinese. But if I in my spare time could notice the danger at the end of February, whose fault was it that the USA was losing control?

An efficient authoritarian regime at my nearest large supermarket.

March 27th. <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/An-efficient-authoritarian-regime-at-my-nearest-large-supermarket>.

This was my first experience of the proper lockdown applying in Britain,

Covid-19 - a Cool War Weapon?

March 27th. <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Covid-19-a-Cool-War-Weapon>.

I'd got hold of an SF novel from 1981 that I had vaguely remembered. It imagines the USA intentionally infecting Europe with a virus that does not kill. This fitted the notion of an intended infection that I had floated as early as 15th February.

Reacting to Covid-19

March 27th. <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Reacting-to-Covid-19>.

This gave evidence that the USA made exactly the same errors as the Wuhan authorities, and with much less excuse.

More recently, I wrote **Who has the most Covid-19 cases?** (<https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Who-has-the-most-Covid-19-cases>), **Covid-19 - the West's failure** (<https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Covid-19-the-Wests-failure>) and **Trump and the WHO: the Buck Stops Anywhere But With Me** (<https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Trump-and-the-WHO-the-Buck-Stops-Anywhere-But-With-Me>).

Free Will and the Coolheart Generation

By Gwydion M. Williams

Fashionable thinkers ask us to believe we are all puppets moved by unknown strings. All sorts of pundits put this forwards as a Deep Truth. They tell us that **Free Will an Illusion**.

They would probably take a different view if someone threatened them with a knife and took their wallet or purse, citing as an excuse the mutual lack of Free Will.

Even more so for rape.

Yet as an intellectual game, it is highly popular.

But to say that **each of us is the product of a definite culture** is highly unpopular.

To say that Individual Freedom has been absurdly hyped will really offend everyone in Anglo culture.

I'm not here with the *aim* of offending anyone in particular. But my quest for truth leads me to hard facts that are grim and offensive to many.

The world as a whole is much more grim and offensive than a majority of us thought it to be in the 1960s. And in particular, it has gone downhill socially from the 1980s, despite growing richer.

Something must be badly wrong.

I see the various misunderstandings of the world as causing massive suffering. Avoidable suffering, in a world rich enough to give everyone a decent life.

Yet my view is not a denial of Free Will, as it is commonly understood. I would simply say that like our concepts of the sun 'rising' and 'setting', 'Free Will' is a common-sense view that grasps only part of the truth.

It works fine for the familiar and for everyday life. It needs to be replaced by deeper insights if you want to try deep thinking.

A proper balance needs to be found.

The opposite extreme to denying Free Will is Total Free Will. There is no Real World. Or else the world is whatever it pleases you to imagine it as. This too is quite popular.

Cursing or even killing the messenger who brings bad news is generally condemned when you see others doing it. But many blame the messenger when the news is bad *for them*. And certain types of philosophical babble can make this seem wise and justified.

I had largely written this analysis at a time when the new coronavirus seemed to be just China's problem. But Western errors over the Covid-19 fit the pattern with tragic exactness.

It can pass for wisdom, to say that maybe bad news only becomes true by someone saying it is true. Italy's right-wing government, Boris Johnson

in Britain, Trump in the USA and Bolsonaro in Brazil all fit this pattern. And it is costing lives even as I write, in mid-April 2020.

Boris Johnson has just emerged from hospital. I am strongly tempted to say the cause is an overdose of Objective Truth, **not** self-administered. But despite this, I was glad when he improved. The Tory alternative seems to be the 'Slytherin Tendency' electing one of their own.

At the end of March, China's hard crack-down meant that less than 15,000 of its cases were outside of Hubei, the province containing Wuhan and where the outbreak began.

But back then the rest of the world had more than 1.6 million cases, and rising fast. More than two and a half million on 22nd April, one-third of them in the USA.

The regional authorities in Wuhan made serious errors early on. They missed the chance to contain the virus while it was still rare. But the virus was also new. It was unexpectedly different from other coronavirus outbreaks, being infectious before symptoms appeared.

Beijing reacted properly when they got solid evidence. As did other East Asian governments. The number of cases per million population stayed low, whereas it soared in Europe and is soaring in the USA.⁵¹

Beijing has reaffirmed a belief in broad Marxism, while also accepting that the world has changed. I'd summarise it by saying that the Militarised Socialism that Lenin created in response to the horrors of World War One is no longer needed for changing the world. Or not unless we get a massive global breakdown, which I still see as unlikely,

Mainstream Japanese culture leans towards seeing the world as ultimately an illusion. But this includes accepting it as an 'illusion' that you have to live within, just as you might accept the rules of a computer game while knowing it is just a game. You'd not stick your hand into a fire and expect it not to burn, even if you believed that a sufficiently Enlightened mind might be able to do this.

Western culture messes around with such ideas. Thus the 1979 film *Being There* appears to be the tale of an idiot gardener whose lack of understanding is mistaken for wisdom. But the end the film shows him walking on water, saying that perhaps he was holy after all.⁵² And this despite him showing earlier that he really did fail to understand.

⁵¹ <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Who-has-the-most-Covid-19-cases>

⁵² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Being_There



"Yes, that's him. That's the author of the book that grabbed me and wouldn't let me go!"

I know it was a comedy. But humour can easily be used as a cover for wicked or foolish behaviour. And has been exactly that, though probably the original pranksters never realise it.

I recently protested at a cartoon circulated on Facebook. One that I found funny, but I was slightly worried about the feelings it was rousing in me. And rather more so about what it might do to others. I said:

"Sexual assault is a serious matter. Please don't make jokes about it. People get badly hurt."

"Most people who make jokes about crimes would never commit such a crime. But many who commit crimes do try to treat it as a joke. So please do not encourage them."⁵³

It is junk ideology. Junk attracts more junk. Real people have been hurt by such jokes.

Many new things need to be understood, if the West is to reverse the rise in inequality and selfishness that has happened from the 1980s.

The intellectual errors were a wider process than just the emergence of the New Right.

Personal liberation for the strong, secure and self-confident was pushed without sufficient thought of the needs of the vulnerable.

Personal liberation has gone far further and faster than most people expected. One example: someone who had forecast in 1965 that the then-traditionalist Irish Republic would vote overwhelmingly to legalise gay marriage within 50 years would have been treated as insane.

It has been liberation for the strong and self-confident. But the vulnerable have also suffered, in Ireland and throughout the Western world.

And need not have suffered, had the strong and self-confident not rejected compassion as a weakness or a deception.

The New Right as Winner By Default

The New Right gained power, because it could sound

53 <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10216972577051788&set=gm.513402846000010&type=3&theater&ifg=1>

like the nearest thing to common sense in a confusing world.

After four decades of power, it has visibly failed. But failed without most people understanding what went wrong in the first place.

People hang onto the same muddled ideas about Freedom that allowed the New Right to emerge. Ideas that have been **genuinely liberating**: but less so than they might have been had there not been the on-going muddle.

If I were to talk about the need for a new morality, people might think I was talking about sex. I'm not, mostly, and nor am I saying what you'd expect. I want to move the boundaries of acceptable freedoms, expanding some and contracting others.

Reducing freedom in the name of morality should definitely not apply to people's private sexual conduct. Or not apart from the general moves towards stopping young people being exploited by the rich and powerful.

I'd reduce the curbs on what people can do in clubs that they have chosen to join. I'd want prostitution legal. But I'd also stop the use of sex in advertising, and on artworks in places where you can see them without having already decided that this is OK.

If you accuse me of trying to limit freedom of expression, I'd plead guilty. And point out that everyone else who thinks about the matter also wants to limit freedom of expression. But most of them only want to do this in familiar ways. Ways that are usually not noticed as limits on freedom.

'Everyone does that', they might say. Everyone now. But acceptable and unnoticed limits on freedom were different in the past. Severe limits on the sexual freedom of heterosexual women, for instance. I'd rate that as a much bigger change than even the de-criminalisation and increasing equality of homosexual relationships.

What has changed in the past can be changed in the future. So the current controls or lack of controls have to be given coherent reasons, rather than just be labelled 'Freedom'.

I fully expect these awkward arguments to be deeply resented. No one likes to be pulled out of a comfortable muddle that makes them feel virtuous.

To adapt a remark by the infamous Emperor Tiberias, let them hate me, so long as I undermine their current foolish thinking.

Tiberias killed fewer of the Roman elite than Augustus had when establishing his rule.

Neither killed anything like the numbers of less articulate and much-less-remembered humans that Julius Caesar killed in his conquest of Gaul. Greek and Roman estimates were a million killed in battle and another million made slaves.⁵⁴ But Naomi Mitchison's 1923 novel *The Conquered* is one of the few that try to see the viewpoint of the conquered Gauls.

Caesar was continuing a long pattern of aggression, in which Rome swallowed up all of its free neighbours.

But most Europeans still count the Roman Empire as a good thing. It might have been weaker without Gaul,

54 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallic_Wars. The source is 'The Gallic Wars' in the Delphi Complete Works of Appian (Illustrated).

which after conquest produced many of its best fighters.

The ramshackle and highly undemocratic Roman Republic would probably have collapsed, without rulers as ruthless as Augustus and Tiberias to produce a stable Roman state.

That's the sad and brutal truth about history. The harsh realities that people have been evading since the 1960s.

To wish for a less brutal world is admirable. And admirers of brutality show themselves foolish as well as degraded: successful regimes manage a mix of lawful controls for objectors and benevolence for the broadly obedient.

But it does no one any good to evade the awkward truth that past brutalities made the world we know.

Or that at least some of those brutalities were needed to avoid a very much worse world. That drastic radicalism was needed to break down the patterns of inequality and oppression that emerged when we shifted from hunter-gatherers to peasants. Yet that unjust order was also an advance on the ignorance and short lives that were a defect in that older hunter-gatherer world.

18th century China was seen by Europeans as very well-governed. Many supporters of the European Enlightenment pointed to it as a place to emulate. But it was hierarchical, and had slavery, though mostly just household-servant slavery in which slaves might be better off than the poor. Imperial China was also very oppressive of its women, including the abomination of foot-binding. These were not the main reasons why Europe forced it to change, but still it was good that it changed.

Living in Britain and born after the end of World War Two, I count myself as fortunate in living in a society where there is no reasonable excuse for killing or oppressing anyone. But this is not a natural condition. And overseas, my country has killed and oppressed from a mix of greed and a foolish notion that this would good for the victims.

I was always certain that to impose a copy of current British society on people with different historic values could not be done without violence and repression. (Even assuming it would be a good idea if done successfully and with pure benevolence, which not everyone would accept.)

I was one of those who said from the very start that the notion of changing Baathist Iraq into a nice free-market democracy was idiotic.⁵⁵ I also knew it was not a sincere ideal for the West's top leaders – they had in 1987 saved Saddam from being overthrown after his failed war against Iran.⁵⁶

Saddam during the Cold War was useful, so he could gas Kurds and torture dissidents without much Western protest or reaction. But after the Soviet collapse, a bunch of powerful fools in Western governments thought they could do without such people.

They were utterly mistaken. Failed to recognise that

55 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-010-to-019/magazine-022-xx/iraq-tricked-into-invading-kuwait/>, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/before-2018/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/reflections-on-the-start-of-the-iraq-war/>

56 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-001-to-010/magazine-004-october-1987/why-the-west-saved-saddam-hussein-in-1987/>

Saddam was doing much the same as Kemal Ataturk had done in Turkey. As had been done in Britain by Oliver Cromwell, and earlier by England's ruthless and autocratic Tudor dynasty.

I did worry that the West would succeed in creating a shallow Iraqi regime that would neglect its own people and let the West drain its oil reserves at minimal cost. Similar things have happened in much of Africa. But in fact they made a mess of it. There was massive corruption, and also lying.

That was the New Right plus New Labour. But I see the underlying cause as the Coolheart view that has captured Western thinking from the 1960s. A view that can be just as damaging when applied by the minority of Enforcers who are scrupulously honest and truthful.

A sincere believer in false ideas can be much more damaging than a simple liar. Much of the damage done by Nazism was down to Hitler holding False Beliefs about Race-War and about Jews. Ideas that had been brewing for the past century, often pioneered in Britain and the USA. Ideas which were not always hostile to Jews: but racism and genocide for those classed as Lesser Races set a precedent for Hitler.⁵⁷

Coolheart ideas are quite unlike Hitler. But those ideas are currently responsible for 99% of the avoidable killings. Pathetic little malignant neo-Nazi groups have yet to manage even 1% of the remaining 1%.

If the aim was to make Iraq as close as possible to the values of Britain or the USA, then Saddam Hussein and the Baath should have been left in place.

If this seems strange to you, then you have a false idea of how Britain became Britain. And how far the USA was dependent on having a core of strong believers in British values who were able to shape later arrivals to those same values.

And were never inhibited about using violence to do so. Lynch Law has always been part of US culture, though it also has strong British roots.

Britain exists as a nice place, because certain cultural values were hammered into the tribal peoples known as Angles and Saxons, and occasionally Jutes. And because the invasion of the freedom-loving slave-trading 'Danes' produced in response a highly autocratic Wessex state.⁵⁸ A state that came to call itself the Kingdom of Anglo-Saxons, and later England.

Britain became a state able to generate a World Empire, because this English Kingdom was conquered by the much more authoritarian Normans. Themselves descendants of freedom-loving and piratical Scandinavians, who as Pagans and then Christian converts saw no need to share their cherished freedom with lesser and inferior humans.

This view of freedom has been sadly consistent among later English. Also among later colonial offshoots, including the successfully rebellious United States of America.

57 Detailed in *Britain's Exterminating Sea Empire* (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/jews-suffering-in-the-fall-of-the-british-empire/>) and *Hitler – the 13th Chancellor* (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/hitler-the-13th-chancellor/>).

58 'Dane' is the common term, but many came from what is now Norway. A few from what's now Sweden, though those mostly went east to what are now the Baltic States and Russia.

It was only in the final couple of centuries of British slave-owning that the main victims were Black Africans rather than other Ethnic British. Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Kidnapped* gives a realistic account of how a Scotsman in the mid-18th century could be seized in Scotland to be sold as a slave in the West Indies. This happened widely, after the Highland uprisings and earlier wars and revolts.

In earlier times, before they took over the West African slave trade begun by Portugal and Spain, the English had little power beyond their own shores. They mostly sold other English:

"Archbishop Anselm, at the London Council of 1102, denounced the practice of selling Englishmen as 'brute beasts'; his pious contemporary Bishop Wulfstand preached against the practice of selling English slaves from Bristol to Ireland." (*The Slave Trade* by Hugh Thomas, Picador 1997, page 35)⁵⁹

Some of these would have been sold on to the Islamic world: to people later classed as outside of the Superior White Race. No one thought that at the time, and Europe as a whole sold vast numbers of poor or unlucky Europeans to the much richer Islamic world.

When John Major called for 'Back to Basics', he was pig-ignorant of what those basics were. But hardly alone in this. His brief attempt to restore an older and more healthy form on One-Nation Toryism failed. Major was succeeded by the 'Three Baldies': a sting of bald unpleasant and unpopular Tory leaders who were would-be populists. Tony Blair flourished because of this, and not because he actually met human needs.

But none of this criticism of Britain should be seen as anti-British. Alternative paths to the modern world offered by Napoleon and later by Imperial Germany might not have been hugely different. Certainly not gentler or less authoritarian.

Those offered earlier by Imperial Spain and later by Nazi Germany would definitely have been worse. Likewise what was offered by the Soviet Union after Brezhnev consolidated it, following Khrushchev's incoherent effort to update it.

Had the post-Stalin Soviet Union followed the Chinese example, with a planned relaxation and preserving respect for the man who made the state, history might have gone much better. As things were, hysterical denunciation of Stalin and then a continuation of much the same methods was one of the things that made the later Coolheart view. Encouraged a pathological distrust of state authority.

If it were true that Stalin had exercised pointless tyranny and that all would have been much better without him, then mistrust of authority would make sense.

But it was not true.

Lenin and Trotsky were rather more active in establishing Bolshevik rule as a one-party dictatorship than Stalin was. For the brief time when Stalin was the most senior Bolshevik in Petrograd, he stuck to a conventional Marxist or Social-Democratic line of making the Bolsheviks left-wing critics of a 'bourgeois' government whose right to rule was not questioned.

Had Lenin remained stuck in Switzerland, Trotsky

59 Cited in <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/before-2018/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/slavery-in-the-british-empire/>

would have remained leader of a small weak faction hostile to the Bolsheviks. There would have been no October Revolution.

Quite possibly there *would* have been a White-Guard Counter-Revolution. As far as I remember, no one doubted that the Kornilov Affair had been a right-wing coup until the New Right realised that this was an Off-Message Fact and started spreading fog and darkness on the matter. For certain, similar things did happen almost everywhere east of Berlin, even before Hitler was legally put into power in 1933 by conventional right-wingers.

Former left-winger Joseph Pilsudski overthrew the Polish Republic he had helped create, and was a fairly popular but right-wing dictator till his death in 1935. Similar things happened most places, with Czechoslovakia a notable exception. But the West would not go to war for Czechoslovakia's left-wing democracy in the way they later did for Poland's right-wing dictatorship.

Democracy is much less of a genuine Western tradition than is now pretended or believed. Actually believed even by most people on the left.

Trump supposedly violates the sanctity of US politics. What sanctity?

I said earlier that the harsh Imperial rule by Augustus and Tiberius was something that had to happen if the Roman state was going to put itself on a stable basis. The Roman Republic was not designed as a democracy, even for the limited numbers of its subjects who were Roman Citizens. It had a gigantic built-in bias towards the rich, and towards the old elite. The Senate was really just a jumped-up town council, and had no right to the privileges that the Senatorial elite tried to hang onto.

The Roman Empire under the Emperors was much more of a meritocracy, and popular with most of the ordinary citizens.

Democracy has two sides to it – voting by the majority, and talented people being able to get the top jobs even if born way down the social scale. And from that viewpoint, the overthrow of the Roman Republic was a limited victory for democracy.

Roman conquests of the kingdoms of the heirs of Alexander the Great could be seen as a neutral event. Indeed, you could say that this older tradition captured the Latin alternative several centuries later, when Constantine moved the capital to Byzantium.

Caesar's conquest of Gaul was probably an historic tragedy, snuffing out an interesting alternative civilisation. It also maybe over-extended the Empire. And as I said, it cost the Gauls a million dead, a million enslaved and all of the rest oppressed.

Foolish Western thinking from the 1990s has caused vastly more avoidable deaths than Julius Caesar, or any of the early Roman Emperors.

It has also been the West shooting itself in the foot. Intelligent policies in the 1990s could have meant a world gradually remoulding itself as a copy of moderate West European and US values. Intelligent and generous policies after 1945 did do just that – remoulding former fascists in West Germany and Italy, and authoritarian nationalists in Japan. Later adding Spain and Portugal.

The pompous fools of the New Right were certain that

1940s policies had been a disaster, and that they knew much better. And these Glorious Exalted Persons got their way in the 1990s. Dragged along many Radical Greens and Moderate Leftists, because all of them were in the grip of the false world-view that I call Coolheart.

I will explain later what I mean by Coolheart. If I were a more conventional philosophiser, I might have called it ‘Friguscormeumism’, or maybe Droserikardianism.⁶⁰ But only those with no interesting ideas need to wrap up their ideas in language that is less plain than it need be.

Some things cannot be simplified – when Newton described gravity, he had to use elaborate mathematical language. And he also wrote in Latin, since he needed to convince a European community of minds where Latin at that time was the shared language, and English little spoken. But the basics can be grasped, and are very different from what was previously thought. My blogs include an effort at doing this for the whole history of gravity: and it was quite popular.⁶¹

Free-Will Denialism

Life is a negotiation with necessity.

Human life includes negotiating for an area of freedom within the overall culture. And this is very different from making an adjustment to the physical and chemical world.

You can’t *persuade* water not to drown you, in the way you might persuade another human who threatened you. You can however take sensible measures to see that it does not. And be aware that the natural world is not ‘out to get you’, in the way a human enemy might be.

Many features of existence you can’t do much about. You’ll probably be alarmed to learn that dozens of subatomic particles called muons pass through your body every second of your life.⁶²

You’ll probably fail to understand how little this matters:

“Some ten thousand muons reach every square meter of the earth’s surface every minute. Each has an energy of more than a hundred million electronvolts. But don’t let that worry you: the kinetic energy of a single flying mosquito is much larger, a full trillion electronvolts. It would take the entire energy of a million million muons to light a modern bicycle lamp for a second. Muons and other subatomic particles are amazingly tiny. Muons from cosmic rays are part of the background radioactivity that we evolved with. Radiation that sometimes damaged the DNA of living creatures and caused random mutations, a few of which were useful for the eventual emergence of complex life and then ourselves.

“It is possibly that without muons or something similar, we would not be here. There are of course other sources of radiation: one is ordinary potassium, which makes bananas measurably but harmlessly radioactive.” (*The Muon and the Green Great Dragon*.)

And bananas are part of Healthy Eating, despite their

60 ‘Cool heart’, as made into Latin and Greek by Google Translate.

61 <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Nobody-Discovered-Gravity>

62 “10,000 muons reach every square meter of the earth’s surface a minute”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muon#Muon_sources.

utterly marginal radioactivity.

That’s the materialist world view. But I think it gets muddled by people thinking that the asocial reality of physical laws should also be applied to social regulations.

We’re told that ‘**nothing is certain except death and taxes**’, as if it were wisdom. But death is part of our biology. States can shorten lives by killing those they count as enemies. Or by neglect, as our current Tory government has been doing for many years. Or by being slow to react to a known global pandemic, as both the British and US governments have recently been doing. But states cannot easily extend the lives of those they cherish.

States before the modern era often exempted whole groups of humans from taxes – aristocrats before the French Revolution. Or they may impose extra – Jews were a frequent target. And the rich often pay far less than their fair share.

I wrote my essay *The Muon and the Green Great Dragon*, quoted from earlier, to explain how different the processes are.⁶³ Muons were first identified as ‘mesons’, a long-expected particle. They turned out to be something completely different. Something which no one expected or wanted or could initially account for. Something which prompted one exasperated theorist to say ‘who ordered that?’, as if the experimenters had made a perverse choice about what they discovered.

The remark was obviously a joke. But jokes work because they are something like the truth.

Or something like a falsehood or half-truth that people see as the truth.

As for the ‘Green Great Dragon’ – in English you’d always say the ‘great green dragon’. You’d be following complex rules for the order of adjectives that native English speakers usually apply correctly, but could not explain in formal terms if asked what the rules were.

But different groups of humans apply different grammar to their languages. Writers can invent some other mode of talking that breaks the rules while remaining understandable. I did this for an unpublished SF novel, set on a world where the original English-speaking settlers have lost technology and changed drastically:

“Oneself is Tad, and one walked as a Treebold man from Sabredrawn to Lord of the Waters, gaining some honour along the way...

“The wise among the Barneti folk say that one’s writings are worthy to be set before untold thousands upon thousands of the Sky-People. Themselves say that the man oneself was in the days of the Treebold Army is of more interest to those stranger-folk than the man one has become...

“All of my Caxtons were laid bare to them, even some of the Book of the Heart that myself did once keep and had not meant to have read by others.”

I followed the splendid example of Professor Tolkien, who has the people of Gondor speak a version of English with as many archaic or imagined elements as he could use without become unreadable. The sick and wounded

63 Alternative title ‘*In a Hole In a Hole Dwelt a Nothingness*’ https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/in-a-hole-in-a-hole-dwelt-a-nothingness/#_Toc504286097

are cared for in 'Houses of Healing', rather than calling it a hospital.

He had earlier scored an unexpected hit with Gollum's comic-degenerate way of talking in *The Hobbit*. This was the character his children wanted to hear more about. So when he was asked to write a 'New Hobbit', he invented a gigantic back-story in *The Lord of the Rings* to explain how this character became the person he was.⁶⁴

Another success is the language and culture of Ents, and also of the wood-wooses – but sadly the good decent people are less fascinating than the evil.

And unlike most of those who copy Tolkien, I copied the *methods* rather than the finished product. The best post-Tolkien fantasy invents its own magic, most notably the *Harry Potter* books. These use familiar English, because they are set in a concealed subculture of own world. But the wizards are unlike previous wizards, and her house-elves utterly unlike the elevated elves in Tolkien.

The idea of a school for magicians with hundreds of pupils and structures similar to our schools is found in Ursula K. Le Guin's 1968 novel *A Wizard of Earthsea*. I think she was the first: magicians were normally assumed to have the older form of a personal apprenticeship. She admired Tolkien and had a good understanding of his work, but broke new ground in her own stories.⁶⁵

The more you think about the world, the more variable and complex it is seen to be.

Brains In The Material World

The materialist world view holds that our thinking is basically a produce of nerve cells. Crick put it very nicely in his book *The Astonishing Hypothesis*, saying

"A person's mental activities are entirely due to the behavior of nerve cells, glial cells, and the atoms, ions, and molecules that make them up and influence them."⁶⁶

This shows the same genius that helped him crack the Genetic Code. And sadly contrasts with his foolishness in being one of the last defenders of traditional eugenics.

And in being convinced that Christianity is foolishness existing for no reason at all.

I have explained elsewhere that it is unlikely we could have got to our present understanding without Christianity, or something very much like it.⁶⁷ Outside of science, Crick was just as guilty as most people of assuming the things he finds familiar are natural and inevitable. But on the physical basis of our minds, I believe him.

Imagine you have a copy of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. You show it to someone very literal-minded, perhaps autistic, and they deny your description. Insist

64 Current editions of *The Hobbit* have hints, but these were added later when Tolkien revised his original text.

65 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/my-science-fiction/eyes-and-illusions-in-tolkien-and-le-guin/>

66 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Astonishing_Hypothesis

67 Religions as Imperfect Human Understanding; <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/998-from-labour-affairs/the-french-revolution-and-its-unstable-politics/45-why-humans-make-religion/religions-as-imperfect-human-understanding/>

that it is just a collection of inked shapes on flat sheets of bleached wood-fibres.

Or alternatively, imagine that you manage to find an intelligent native of an isolated tribe where writing is unknown. Or cross into an Alternate World where this is so. They have learned English and have watched several Shakespearean plays. They would assume that each performance was learned from the last, as is the case in many poetic traditions, including Homer before his works were written down. They would be staggered by the suggestion that if some disaster wiped out all knowledge of Shakespeare, the plays could be re-started if just one copy of the *Complete Works* had survived. How could this odd hunk of thin white sheets with peculiar dark marking have anything to do with the live performance of living actors?

I see no contradiction in accepting that our thoughts are based on nerve cells, and insisting that each human brain is an independent decision-making centre.

A decision-making centre that contains *several* subsystems.⁶⁸ One part of our mind may demand food, when the higher centres know that we are overeating. Or our conscious self may be reminded by some usually-silent subcentre of something we need to do. Or after failing to think through a problem, the answer suddenly pops into our conscious minds, as if a subsystem we don't consciously control had been working on it.

People were well aware of what's sometimes called the Unconscious Mind, well before Freud put his own strange and often mistaken interpretation on it.

Systems independent of conscious thoughts deliver sophisticated results. While writing this essay, I saw the relevance of Mark Twain's remarks on German, given below. But then had trouble finding the original, because where he jokes about a turnip being 'she', I had remembered a radish.

I'd have to suppose that human memory works by linkage. A radish is not so different from a turnip, so some subsystem within my mind decided it was close enough. In a similar spirit, one quiz contestant claimed that the British Army at the Battle of Waterloo was commanded by jazz musician Duke Ellington. Another spoke of Chicago gangster Al Cappuccino.⁶⁹ The deeper layers of our minds make errors that the higher layers find baffling.

But the basic point is that each of us is sophisticated decision-making centre. A bundle of clever and mostly cooperative subsystems that we then call 'The Individual'.

I find absurd the notion that we lack Free Will. That we could have a whole complexity of conscious and unconscious systems for thinking, but actually be controlled by something external. And what? And why?

Negotiating With Necessity

'Free Will' gets confused with the understandable hope for a *successful* negotiation with necessity.

68 And So Say All of Me, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/20-science-and-so-say-all-of-me/>

69 Similar examples are included on a Flickr Album of mine, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/45909111@N00/albums/72157694369021360>

If I wanted to go from Britain to Australia, I would need some means of transport, probably an aircraft. I would need a visa. And I would need a current passport – just recently I needed five tries and two wasted trips to a supposedly suitable photobooth before that particular negotiation with necessity was resolved to their satisfaction. My own satisfaction was not relevant in that particular case: I had to give them a photo with glasses off, mouth closed and eyes exactly level with each other.

I am not currently planning to go to Australia, and was not even before the Covid-19 crisis. But there is no necessity that would prevent me, so long as the will of other humans allow it. Nor any necessity that requires me to.

Denying Free Will would be denying that it was my decision. Or the separate decisions by others to go, or not to go. It would be a very odd sort of ‘necessity’ that decided such things for humans, but also gave them the illusion that they chose.

But is there *Necessity*? Sometimes. It all depends on what necessity you are up against.

You can’t negotiate with a muon. You cannot change the laws of physics.

The muon exists independent of human will. It was discovered contrary to human expectation.

The dragon is a produce of human will and imagination.

Not saying ‘a green great dragon’ is an accident of English, which most of its native speakers accept. Treat it as *necessity*, without realising that they have been pre-fabricated to follow the complex rules of English grammar by their social environment.

Or that other rules are possible, within the familiar world.

Other languages can sound very odd when translated word for word. Especially the genders that most European languages view as necessities. Mark Twain, who never looked much below the surface of events,⁷⁰ noted how different German was. Tried putting German into English with the word-genders preserved:

“It is a bleak Day. Hear the Rain, how he pours, and the Hail, how he rattles; and see the Snow, how he drifts along, and of the Mud, how deep he is! Ah the poor Fishwife, it is stuck fast in the Mire; it has dropped its Basket of Fishes; and its Hands have been cut by the Scales as it seized some of the falling Creatures; and one Scale has even got into its Eye, and it cannot get her out. It opens its Mouth to cry for Help; but if any Sound comes out of him, alas he is drowned by the raging of the Storm. And now a Tomcat has got one of the Fishes and she will surely escape with him.” (*Tale Of The Fishwife And Its Sad Fate.*)

Also:

“Gretchen: Wilhelm, where is the turnip?

“Wilhelm: She has gone to the kitchen.

“Gretchen: Where is the accomplished and beautiful English maiden?

“Wilhelm: It has gone to the opera.” (*The Awful*

70 See Mark Twain, *The Unfunny Underside*. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/88-literature/45-about-literature-and-art/254-2/>

German Language).⁷¹

But word-genders are part of the ancient heritage of Indo-European languages. Lost in English when it became the language of the poor and illiterate after the Norman Invasion, with occasional exceptions like saying ‘she’ for a ship. It is English, not German, that departs from the European norm.

And idioms vary everywhere. A German would cause confusion if they said ‘I understand train station.’ (I don’t understand a thing.) Or ‘now you have the salad.’ (Now you’re in trouble.) “He is going onto my cookie.” (He is annoying me.) ‘She is playing the insulted sausage.’ (She’s all worked up.) ‘The TV has fleas!’ (There’s static on the TV). ‘You take me out of watermelons!’ (You drive me crazy.) ‘Having dwarfs on one’s brain’ (Being a little crazy).⁷²

In other languages, people say things that would literally translate as ‘Rabbit-blood tea’ (red-coloured black tea). ‘He cannot crucify girlfriend’ (He can never get a girlfriend). ‘Land Crocodile’ (a playboy or womanizer).⁷³

But things in English seem just as strange to foreigners. For instance someone posted on a Facebook comic site an old picture showing the animals going in two by two. But both lions had manes, i.e. were male. And their comment was ‘*Good Luck breeding those lions*’.⁷⁴ In British English, that means ‘it can’t happen’: but where is the sense in it?

Sometimes the words we thoughtlessly use are a hidden form of mental control. I had for years spoken about both submarines and U-boats, without realising that they were exactly the same thing. The same except that U-boats are German. This usage probably happened during World War One, as part of the Britain cover-up of the awkward fact that both states were trying to starve the other, with Britain being much more successful.

I assume that this went in parallel with the normal English term for Germany’s ruler shifting from Emperor to Kaiser, and what he ruled changing from Realm to Reich. Someone with easy access to old books and newspapers should do a study of just how this shift occurred.

It is also interesting to wonder how this change was imposed. I suppose most people never noticed it. Or accepted it along with the general hatred of Germany, previously seen as closer to us than France.

One person who did notice was George Orwell:

“Of the outbreak of war I have three vivid memories which, being petty and irrelevant, are uninfluenced by anything that has come later. One is of the cartoon of the ‘German Emperor’ (I believe the hated name ‘Kaiser’ was not popularized till a little later) that appeared in the last days of July.”⁷⁵

But Orwell never chose to expand on this. One of his difference from the Communists was that he refused

71 <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/texts/twain.german.html>

72 <https://www.quora.com/What-words-phrases-in-your-language-have-funny-beautiful-or-weird-direct-translations-into-English>

73 <https://www.boredpanda.com/translation-fails/>

74 <https://meme.xyz/meme/47658/good-luck-breeding-those-lions.html>

75 Orwell’s *Collected Essays 1*, Page 588. *My Country Right or Left.*

to denounce World War One as an amoral brawl between rival Empires. Indeed, to think along those lines would have undermined his odd blend of Moderate Socialism and sympathy for the declining British Empire.

Orwell does not deserve his reputation as a defender of truth. He was very selective in which truths he noticed. One clear instance is *The Road to Wigan Pier*, where we have his diary. We know that he left out many examples of British workers thinking for themselves and making a positive response to the crisis the ruling class had made.⁷⁶

Individuals make choices, good or bad.

Language is a product of human will – but a collective human will.

Languages also have a way of splitting into separate dialects that may in time cease to be understandable.

They can also be pulled back into some sort of unity by the authority of the state and the culture. Or kept slightly different by two separate states and cultures: Britain has *mums, flats* and *biscuits*, while the US has *moms, apartments* and distinguishes *cookies* and *crackers*. And their First Floor is our Ground Floor.

Those are human rules. The laws of physics and chemistry are something quite different.

The rules of our universe were apparently fixed beyond alteration by our Origin Event, more than thirteen thousand million years ago. Which may not have been exactly the Big Bang of the original view: but it definitely produced a universe too hot and dense for normal matter to exist before it had cooled a great deal. But with laws in place that would allow stars and planets to be created as the universe cooled. To allow biology, and eventually allow intelligent creatures,

Human laws are open to change. But we cannot *easily* change our own nature, or control how we change.

Henry Ford with his cheap automobiles failed to realise what ‘easier transport’ would really mean. That it would undermine the stability of the small-town life he cherished, simply because it was now so easy to move on. That people could now neglect the local small shops in favour of giant supermarkets.

Transport can and does change the nature of the society within which individual humans are decision-making centres.

In the 18th century, the British state built good roads into the Scottish Highlands, successfully undermining the culture of the clans. In the 20th, the Dalai Lama was all in favour of Beijing building good roads into Tibet. He failed to realise that this undermined Tibet’s autonomy: an autonomy based previously on journeys from Lhasa to Beijing taking as much as a year. One of many reasons why I do not follow the general veneration of that very silly man.⁷⁷

If the ‘transporter’ from *Star Trek* really existed, that would change the whole nature of the society. Of course the laws of physics make them unlikely – and if they worked you could make multiple copies of each human. The drama series has allowed this for occasional adventures, but not allowed it to become a norm. If Starfleet could make hundreds of copies of its best officers then the whole of human society would become alien.

76 Orwell On Workers & Other Animals, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/88-literature/45-about-literature-and-art/orwell-looking-down-on-british-workers/>

77 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/42-china/tibet/the-truth-about-the-dalai-lama/>

The appeal of the ‘franchise’ is that it is never too different from the USA as it was when each particular series was made.

Star Trek has always moved in tune with the Hollywood blend of progressive US opinion. The original series had just one woman among the main characters, who was also one of just two notable non-whites. And she was virtually Captain Kirk’s receptionist. She had a subordinate and ‘female’ role, as did Nurse Chapel and Yeoman Janice Rand. There are no visible females in commanding roles. In one of the last episodes of the dismal Third Season, a woman who aspires to command is demented and criminal.⁷⁸

And yet Lieutenant Uhura did serve as a wonderful inspiration at the time.

When it returned in the late 1980s, the series gave women a much bigger role, in tune with changed norms.

Only with *Star Trek: Discovery* in 2017 did they finally dare show male homosexuals as normal crew members. And Season One of *Star Trek: Picard* is coy about an apparent lesbian relationship between two major characters. One commentator noted that it is the kind of ‘gay moment’ that foreign networks could easily snip out if they prefer. Likewise Sulu having a male partner in the film *Star Trek Beyond*.

The racial balance in the modern show also reflects the USA, not the world as a whole.

And sadly, *Star Trek Beyond* was one of many Hollywood films that had a black man as chief villain. Most such films will have a virtuous black man in some lesser role, as *Demolition Man* did. Racism is not overt, but racists feelings are subtly tapped into. Even when a black man is on the side of virtue, it is mostly as a specialist in force and violence.

Black women are mostly shown as sexy. Mostly superior fighters, but seldom committedly evil. Also a feature of US racism.

That’s media. Media can change our thinking in fairly obvious ways. Technology does it very unexpectedly.

If the idea of super-fast travel by Hyperloops takes off – and unlike ‘transporters’ these would work with existing physics and new but plausible technology – then commuting over far vaster distances would suddenly become possible. With speeds of 700 miles an hour, and without the complexities of getting on and off an aircraft, you could easily live in Wales and work in London.

To return to Henry Ford, the man had no idea of the likely results of his own actions. And like many others, the failure of his own ‘negotiation with necessity’ led him to blame the wrong people.

Ford’s decision to publish an anti-Semitic book called *The International Jew* was entirely his own choice. He did gigantic damage by spreading what had previously been low-status nonsense from right-wing Russians in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. I’ve covered this in a long essay called *Hitler – the 13th Chancellor*, detailing Hitler’s organic links with British and wider European culture.⁷⁹

The mainstream media covering this up is also a free-will decision, though a very predictable one.

Weak links by the IRA and by a former Pope to the Nazis are hyped. Much more significant links with the Anglo core up to 1939 are left in darkness.

78 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnabout_Intruder

79 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/hitler-the-13th-chancellor/>

Coolhearts

‘Cool’ is a concept that I saw heavily pushed in the 1970s, by people from the once-radical youth movement. Favoured when they no longer believed that they could change the world.

This was far too pessimistic – the world was indeed changing drastically. But to have shaped those changes into a viable new left-wing order would have needed **authority**. This failed all through the 1970s, mostly because the left failed to make hard choices. Had a pathological fear of Corporatism. Opposed Incomes Policy and Workers Control, because these would not be pure expressions of Spontaneous Popular Will.

That they were the best available options was missed at the time.

No one on the left was expecting the Thatcher / Reagan solution, which falsely claimed that Market Forces would implement Spontaneous Popular Will. That it would roll back oppressive and threatening Corporatism.

People anyway were turning more and more to Personal Liberation.

Had fantasies about glamorous rebels standing heroically alone.

The Punk subculture went to great lengths to behave in ways that would make its members socially unacceptable.

They failed.

Unacceptable behaviour was marketed as the latest Cool thing.

Youth movements since then have been seriously demoralised.

Short of actual criminality, you can do as you please. You may also get very lucky and be pushed as a celebrity.

But it is not a good way to live.

‘Absolute Freedom For My Superego’ was the ideal.

The reality is appalling.

I will credit Punk with normalising the idea of a socially aggressive woman. A minority of women have always been individually aggressive, or aggressive to crowds of other women or social inferiors. But mostly they had a man to hide behind in public forums. And this continued as the norm even in the hippy / radical movement, and also the Labour Movement.

More widely, there was a move to be ‘cool’. Which was an old idea and a complex idea.

From the Wiki I got a mix of meanings. Menthol cigarettes will give you lung cancer, but have no inherent link to Coolhearts. But the following did fit:

“The Second World War brought the populations of Britain, Germany and France into intimate contact with Americans and American culture. The war brought hundreds of thousands of GIs whose relaxed, easy-going manner was seen by young people of the time as the very embodiment of liberation; and with them came Lucky Strikes, nylons, swing and jazz—the American Cool.

“To be cool or hip meant hanging out, pursuing sexual liaisons, displaying the appropriate attitude of narcissistic self-absorption, and expressing a desire to escape the mental straitjacket of all ideological causes. From the late 1940s onward, this popular culture influenced young people all over the world, to the great dismay of the paternalistic elites who still ruled the official culture. The French intelligentsia were outraged, while the British educated classes displayed a haughty indifference that smacked of an older aristocratic cool...

“[Cool is] a heavily manipulative corporate ethos...

“Cool can be exploited as a manufactured and empty idea imposed on the culture at large through a top-down process by the ‘Merchants of Cool’. The ‘Merchants of Cool’ are sellers of popular culture who capitalize off of

trends and subcultures, most often created by youths. Some modern examples of the ‘Merchants of Cool’ are record company executives, sneaker and fashion company branders and merchandisers. Furthermore, ‘cool has become the central ideology of consumer capitalism’[56], the selling of cool thus drives young people and adults attempting to ‘fit in’ to the mainstream and adhere to trends to purchase products and/or brands that make them appear cool...

“In the novel *Spook Country* by William Gibson one character equates cool with a sense of exclusivity: ‘Secrets,’ said the Bigend beside her, ‘are the very root of cool.’

“In the novel *Lords and Ladies* by Terry Pratchett the Monks of Cool are mentioned. In their passing-out test a novice must select the coolest garment from a room full of clothes. The correct answer is ‘Hey, whatever I select’, suggesting that cool is primarily an attitude of self-assurance.”⁸⁰

I also notice that Cool is a pose that instantly vanishes when the going gets tough. When actual control over the world is lost.

Had someone been ‘cool’ about the 9/11 attack on New York’s Twin Towers and said ‘hey, that’s less than one-tenth of the annual US road deaths’, they’d probably have been lynched.

Road deaths are the price that the USA chooses to accept as part of the Cult of the Holy Automobile. Likewise gun deaths including school massacres: a price for gun ownership and fantasies of Rugged Individualism.

9/11 was bitter enemies inflicting damage on the USA. Making the same sort of attacks on non-combatants that the US had been inflicting all round the world after the Soviet collapse.

Coolhearts show a wonderful stoicism when it comes to other people’s suffering. But almost always scuttle to authority when hurt or at risk.

Coolheart sneer at the Common Interest, when it might cost them something. But are then baffled that other people put themselves first when you’d like them to put you first.

Coolheart try to treat everything as a joke. They assume nothing bad will happen. Or if it does, nothing much can be done about it.

For Coolhearts, we live in a Bespoke Universe. There must be something wrong if I can’t do what I want. But social spending is despised – ‘nanny state’.

The current Covid-19 crisis could be seen as Coolheart chickens coming home to roost.

It started in China, but East Asian governments contained it. Europe and the USA were willfully foolish, with the USA currently having one-third of all cases. With most European countries also having huge totals. Including the UK.

Freedom Always Within Limits

Do I want to limit freedom?

Yes.

And so do you.

People like to say “we have a free society”.

Not “we have a society where people are not prevented by law or custom from doing the things we see as suitable for that particular sort of person”.

Yet that is the reality. A reality that has changed over the decades. We no longer expect lesser freedom for women or non-whites – at least not openly. But we still have age rules, and on sexual matters these have been strengthened.

Born in 1950, I have a clear memory of how our own society

has shifting its *Limits to Freedom* on many issues:

- Under-age sex – prohibitions toughened and taken more seriously.
- Free use of drugs – mostly not accepted.
- Self-definition of sex – maybe.
- Personal firearms – British rules, always tough, have been tightened up.
- Divorce – much easier in England since 1969, and globally.
- Gay marriage – once unthinkable, and now being normalised.
- Polygamy, polyandry and concubinage – not illegal, but not legally recognised.
- A Right to Die and a Right to a Dignified Exit – legal in some countries.

All of these raise issues.

In the 1960s, some people thought that a formal Age of Consent was just another prejudice. Or it might be lowered to 12, which had once been a common norm. But this has been strongly rejected. And I entirely agree: the young are vulnerable.

There was a 1969 film called *Age of Consent* that must have been intended to erode existing rules. But had to be careful:

"It was originally intended to cast an unknown 17-year-old Australian actress ... but in the end 22-year-old Helen Mirren was chosen".⁸¹

It would probably have been banned in the USA with a 17-year-old, since 18 is the shared norm covering the range of ages applying to US states.

"In 1880, the ages of consent [in the USA] were set at 10 or 12 in most states, with the exception of Delaware where it was 7. The ages of consent were raised across the U.S. during the late 19th century and the early 20th century. By 1920 ages of consent generally rose to 16–18 and small adjustments to these laws occurred after 1920. The final state to raise its age of general consent from under 16 to 16 or higher was Hawaii, which changed it from 14 to 16 in 2001."⁸²

The 1962 film of *Lolita* had a 14-year-old playing the 12-year-old victim. The 1997 version had a 'Lolita' born in 1980, making her over 16 and legal for sex in the UK.⁸³ Sex between a middle-aged man and a just-legal girl is increasingly disapproved of, but not currently illegal.

England had an Age of Consent set at 12 in 1275. The mother of the future Henry 7th was a victim of this:

"Margaret was 12 when she married the 24-year-old Edmund Tudor... He died of the plague in captivity ... leaving a 13-year-old widow who was seven months pregnant with their child.

"Taken into the care of her brother-in-law Jasper, at Pembroke Castle, the Countess gave birth on 28 January 1457 to her only child, Henry Tudor, the future Henry VII of England. The birth was particularly difficult, because of her youth and small size. She never gave birth again."⁸⁴

A case worth mentioning when some right-wing fool makes an issue of the Prophet Mohammed having had one very young wife. It was anyway quite common in all cultures for an under-age girl to be married, but without sex until she reached the normal age in that culture.

For drugs, the initial notion that they were OK ran into the awkward reality of a lot of deaths, and some people going insane. This contrasts with alcohol, where you have to be a

really determined drinker of alcohol to do yourself serious physical or mental harm. Drinkers with problems usually had issues already, and looked for the wrong solution.

An inexperienced drinker can kill themselves if they drink a lot without remembering that the effects are delayed. And if their digestive system does not look after them by vomiting up the excess, as mine did when I was a foolish young drinker.

Most illegal drugs are much more dangerous, with drastic effects from light use. This includes cannabis, for an unpredictable minority of users.

I myself never tried them. I was not used to smoking tobacco, so smoked cannabis was unfamiliar, and I do not remember anything else being about. With an uncle who was a lifelong hopeless schizophrenic, I felt it wise to be careful. And I anyway found the real world extraordinary enough without chemical boosters.

Still, cannabis is popular, and OK for most users. My solution would be Cannabis Clubs. Requiring membership and to look after members. To ban anyone who persistently had problems. And to keep other illegal drugs as illegal.

And if you ask 'why not for alcohol?', I would repeat that it is less dangerous. That we have existing customs in the West that mostly take care of people.

On self-definition of sex, the general view is that a person in possession of a penis is definitely not a woman. If they wish, they could be placed in a minority of intermediates – maybe call it 'Interzone'. Most people would accept this. But the majority also see sex as definite and biological.

Current marriage law in much of the West is a muddle. Traditionally the laws concentrated on the status and rights of possible children. Property and status were the right of those born within a marriage, with ambiguities if the man denied that these were his. The children of recognised mistresses or concubines often had lesser but definite rights. They could even be legitimised: William the Conqueror was also known as William the Bastard. He was able to become Duke of Normandy because the family accepted him in the absence of legitimate male heirs. Was the first choice as successor of the pious Edward the Confessor, and conquered England under a banner granted to him by the Pope.

As of now, we have a Conservative Prime Minister and his current women expecting a baby,⁸⁵ and it is not an issue. They are planning to marry when Johnson is disentangled from his second marriage: but few would be much concerned if they did not.

Marriage was considered to be irrelevant to same-sex relationships in most of those human societies that tolerated them, since no children would result. But the modern Western attitude has shifted much more to personal relationships, and marriage is no longer seen as the making of links between two families. It is largely free of parental control, and it is almost forgotten that in the not too distant past grown-up children had unwanted marriages imposed on them.

When Gay Marriage was being pushed for legalisation in Britain, I said that David Cameron was a fool to say it was a conservative thing to do. But not being a conservative, I was not bothered.

My belief is that the norms will shift further. Polygamy and concubinage were generally outlawed to give more power and status to women – but is this still necessary? Concubinage exists unofficially, of course. So do rights and claims on inheritance, but ambiguously and sometimes unfairly.

One extra oddity – People's China banned concubinage and plural marriage and gave women the right of divorce in defiance of their husbands for the first time. But in a book about

81 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Consent_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Consent_(film))

82 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Ages_of_consent_in_the_United_States#History

83 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominique_Swain

84 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Lady_Margaret_Beaufort#Second_marriage

85 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/29/boris-johnson-and-carrie-symonds-expecting-summer-baby>

a Chinese village, I learned that when there was a wife and a concubine and they and the husband were happy with this, it was left alone.

The ban on polyandry is odder: maybe a part of male authority. It does have one famous example – the five husbands of Draupadi in the *Mahabharata*, who in the Sacred Legend bore one son to each of them.⁸⁶ It was perhaps an ancient Hindu tradition and was definitely found in Tibet, where the Communist Party tries to discourage it.

Myself, I would relax things. Let people form whatever relations they choose, and give them legal rights.

I'd also like to regularise the vexed issue of Surrogate Motherhood. I can't see it is any less legitimate than other sharing of parental functions. But I would require it to be done by not-for-profit agencies, which would also be obliged to take care of children who might be defective or unwanted.

I'd also suggest that the Surrogate Mothers should be women who have already been through child-birth and had children of their own.

Passing over the new baby to another family that wants it could become a new norm. It might be seen as a perfect solution by existing children.

That's how limits and freedoms might be at the start of life. And for its ending, I favour the drift towards a Right to Die and a Right to a Dignified Exit.

The latter covers cases where a person could live on for years, but with a quality of life so low that they prefer death. Or when demented and unable to care, but who had previously decided they did not want to live on like that. Or in mental pain and unlikely to improve.

I avoid the term Euthanasia, because historically this included a desire by the ruling elite to kill off those they saw as useless or dangerous.

I also accept that Rights to Death could shade into this. Which is why I'd favour a separate body of Defenders of Life. These would be there to stop people dying when it seemed unjustified. But also under a solemn oath to support the legal position, even where they do not agree with it.

All State Controls are Always Enslavement. Sometimes.

Hopefully I have now convinced you that the West does not have 'Freedom' in some abstract sense. That the reality is always an **Area of Freedom**.

Quite a lot of you will disagree with some of my views on how I would draw the limits of our Area of Freedom, particularly on sexual matters. That is not the main issue. Indeed it is fine with me, because my main point is to show how many possible views of Freedom there are. The social consensus will decide such matters, over the long term. I throw out a few ideas that seem sensible to me, but don't expect things to change quickly.

Of much more importance is the matter of so-called Free Markets.

Which are not 'Free' except by a false understanding imposed by media dominated by the rich and selfish.

One trick is to pretend Absolute Liberty exists, and is now being invaded by state tyranny. It is a pretence, because the libertarians protest against new controls in a system that has always had rules.

And to pretend that a slight shifting in the agreed Area of Freedom is the same as taking away freedom.

If the Voice of Money were the Voice of God, then it would be sensible to listen to it.

But why should we accept such an odd theology?

86 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draupadi#Children>

Religions either see money as evil, or see too much concern as an evil. In the modern world, and particularly the USA, cowardly little sycophants in the Religious Right back away from this. Yet it is so.

To be rich is to be able to be supported by the rest of the society, regardless of other people's wishes. 'Gentlemen of Independent Means' – the work of others supports them

The rest of us need to find a niche that others find useful, either by selling goods, or selling our labour, or raising our own food and other necessities. Or a mix.

Marx correctly saw that small-scale production was doomed. Assumed that the working class would want to take over.

In fact many working people have accepted the rights of Private Business. Believe they are richer and freer as a result.

Which made them supporters of centre-right conservatism. But this would in the past accept that limits were needed and might need to be extended.

Hilaire Belloc denounced the process *The Servile State*.⁸⁷ Managing to say the opposite of what he wanted in this title: to be servile is to be docile and obedient.

Hilaire Belloc was also an admirer of Mussolini as dictator.⁸⁸ Denounced moderate state intervention by British liberals as enslavement, but then praised Fascist Italy, which criminalised all rival politics and also pioneered the Mixed Economy.⁸⁹

Mussolini had begun as a socialist. He was a leading member of a broad-front party that included those who would later form the Italian Communist Party. But when he invented fascism, he became a straightforward defender of old-fashioned values and ruling-class privileges. He did also provide welfare for workers, but only for as long as they stayed servile.

Post-war, sympathy for fascism was embarrassing even for those who hastily turned their coats when there was a war between the Anglo powers and Fascism. *The Servile State* was rehashed as *The Road to Serfdom*⁹⁰ by Friedrich von Hayek. Hayek was safely distance from Nazism, having fled Austria when Hitler took it over.⁹¹ But still praised Belloc in his book.

Belloc said:

"The control of the production of wealth is the control of human life itself."

Absolutely true. And I'd credit Marx with being the first to see the link clearly. Before Marx, most people imagined 'production of wealth' as something that happened within a human existence that was dominated by other forces.

Balfour in 1891 wrote a long and intelligent discussion of progress and change in his *Fragment On Progress*. But *entirely omits the possibility that shifting from agriculture to industry mattered*.⁹²

Balfour was 25 in 1873, at a time when socialist politics were marginal and Marx almost unknown. Things were very different by 1895, when Belloc was 25. Since most people do not change their thinking much after their mid-20s, that may explain the different perception.

For Belloc and Hayek, 'control of human life itself' was fine when the bulk of such control was in the hands of the rich. But tyranny when the state takes a share, even if that state is controlled by a government freely chosen by the majority.

87 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Servile_State

88 <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Why-Hilaire-Belloc-Reverenced-Mussolini>

89 For more on Belloc, see <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-037-to-048/magazine-039-not-yet-scanned/fascism-and-social-nationalism/>

90 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Road_to_Serfdom

91 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_von_Hayek

92 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/balfour-on-cobden-and-progress/balfour-on-progress/>

My belief is that their real objection was that the vulgar masses were having more control over their own lives.

And neither properly dealt with the awkward truth that 'economic freedom' will automatically destroy independent small property: turning many into dependent wage workers and raising up a few to vast wealth.

Governments can choose either to let small property continue to decay, or try to preserve it. Fascism did do some things to preserve small property, but then wrecked itself in avoidable wars.

In Europe and the USA, farmers are preserved by vast state subsidies. And are usually bitterly hostile to anyone else getting state aid.

But whatever your politics, for an economy to exist, there must be rules.

Stock exchanges work by an inner core of people ready to either buy or sell a particular share. One approaches another and asks them to quote the price for both buying and selling. Only after doing this will they learn if they will sell or buy. This limits the degree to which they can talk up or talk down the price from its proper value.

That much is fine. But most of them also allow 'short selling'. People selling stock they do not possess, in the hope of buying it cheaper later on.

This gives an unfair advantage to those who anticipate economic disasters, and let them happen.

It would be possible to eliminate most large-scale speculation with a 'Tobin Tax': a small tax on all financial transactions.⁹³ This would prevent the gigantic flows of money based on some fractional difference in pricing.

Yes, it would be a limit on existing freedom. But it is not some wicked corporatist violation of Eternal Freedom. It is a redrawing of the current Area of Freedom in the interest of the public and productive work.

And the reality of New Right politics has been very different from what was promised.

We have not so far seen any country whatsoever deliver the promise of Low Taxes or Small State. Efforts that way keep bumping into the awkward reality that the state has always grown larger as societies get richer, and as Independent Small Production dwindles

Feed-the-Rich has been the core reality.

The Enforcement of Freedom

Saying 'The Enforcement of Freedom' would be nonsense, if there were some wonderful metaphysical entity that could be called The Freedom.

There is no such entity.

I don't believe in unlimited freedom – and nor do you.

People can claim 'no limits', only by saying that the things they want to stop are not really freedom.

The unspoken rule is, **Anything I don't like, isn't freedom.**

Meaning that promises of freedom are useless unless you know what they dislike.

'Economic Freedom' has meant 'draw the lines where it suits most business people'.

And that is within a society that has had various values stamped into it by past brutality and oppression.

Freedom of 'The Individual' becomes possible, only after the society has imposed a culture that raises everyone in a belief that their real identity is contained within a socially acceptable version of 'The Individual'.

To survive the crises of the mid-20th century, the Western

Mainstream had to borrow from Leninism and Fascism. And much more from Leninism, because the Soviet Union was a major winner in World War Two.

The Soviet Union appealed to those who were not at that time included in the nice-liberal order.⁹⁴

During the Cold War, vast amounts of Marxist and Leninist thought was absorbed into the mainstream culture.

The New Right attempt at a purge was inconsistent, and has failed.

The 'human nature' known to us is the product of this change, which would have been unlikely had Stalin not made the Soviet Union strong.

And the older now-rejected version of 'human nature' was also the product of past oppression going back many centuries, as well as past demands for freedom.

Which are actually a demand for a modified area of freedom.

The 'human nature' known to us is has been imposed on the human raw material.

The New Right has visibly failed. But what I call the Coolheart Generation finds it hard to come up with anything better.

The view might be: "*Society is Tyranny. What we need are improved individuals*".

My view is that a society with some forms of coercion is necessary to encourage improved individuals.

Or to stop them getting worse.

Or to have any sort of meaningful individual existence.

Western society has programmed you to think of certain forms of control as tyranny, but to accept others without question.

The issue should be, which limits on freedom do we want? Which depend on circumstance – most people accept limits in case of war or emergency. Almost all of us have accepted rules for the current Covid-19 crisis.

How Society Manufactures Individuals

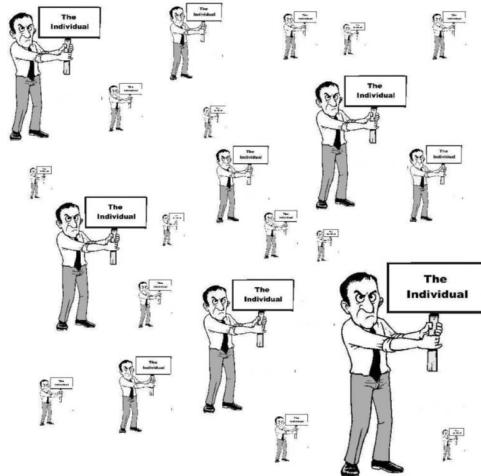
Advertisers Saatchi & Saatchi tapped into deep feelings back in 1979. They helped give Thatcher victory in 1979 with the famous poster of a long queue of unemployed. The one that said 'Labour Isn't Working'⁹⁵

The sensible consensus formed in the 1940s had broken down. We in the Ernest Bevin Society said at the time that the British Left made Thatcher possible.⁹⁶

94 <https://gwydionwilliams.com/about/777-back-up-for-gwydion/against-globalisation/the-left-redefined-the-normal/>

95 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_Isn%27t_Working

96 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/>



The best solution would have been Trade Unions accepting more power and responsibility. An alternative right-wing and conservative solution would have been for their power to be cut back, but nothing else changed.

Marxist mostly opposed the incorporation of Trade Unions into the state. Probably not correct Marxism. Or if it was correct according to Marx, then Marx was wrong about the world a century after his life.

Tories had the option to restore the balance and curb radicalism.

But Thatcher believed in ‘Free Market’ solutions. She rejected everything that had been learned since the disasters of the 1930s, caused by uncontrolled speculation.

It didn’t work, except to give more money to the rich. The economy didn’t grow any faster.⁹⁷ But it was sold as a grand success by the media. Media dominated by the very same rich people who were the only real gainers.

Tony Blare with New Labour made a disastrous adjustment – from one illusion to another. Saw Thatcherite fantasies as an unwelcome truth that left-wingers must adjust to.

We said at the time that abandoning Clause 4 was foolish.⁹⁸

Thatcher chose a radical overhaul of the economy, not realising that radicalism is always bad for right-wing causes. Her replacement for the 1940s consensus worked much worse than a normalising right-wing government would have.

Thatcher was victim of an illusion. Her belief that there was no such thing as society.

Her belief was in ‘norms’ of human behaviour, existing without state action. As unchangeable as the weather.

Only it is now clear we have changed the weather.

And there is no such thing as a human individual separate from the society that forms them. Or societies, or society and subculture.

Conflicting demands on who you should be, makes for more interesting and less happy individuals. Even the sudden emergence of Western Europe as the strongest global power may have been due to a confusion of belief. The Christian Reformation and Counter-Reformation stalemated each other, so what was truth?

A book called ‘*Genius and Anxiety: How Jews Changed the World, 1847-1947*’ has a nice account of a host of creative and often very unhappy people. But fails to notice that there were many similar people who were not Jews. A host of highly creative Scots and Irish in Britain. Picasso as a Spaniard in Paris. Members of majority communities who were marginalised by being homosexual. And so on.

It’s also interesting that Hungarian Jews outmatch other European Jews. Hungary keeps a language and some culture from ancient nomadic invaders.

But if someone tried writing ‘*How Jews Changed the World, 1747-1847*’, they would find very little. Jews barely mattered to a fast-changing Europe that was nominally Christian, but struggling with ideas of Enlightenment and Democracy.

Jews played no significant part in the scientific revolution that happened within Europe’s Christian majority from the 16th century. Had no important influence on literature, unless one accepts the disputed claim that the author of *Don Quixote*

very-old-issues-images/magazine-001-to-010/magazine-010/the-british-left-made-thatcher-possible/

97 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/problems-magazine-older-issues/p1-44/>

98 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-037-to-048/magazine-045-not-yet-scanned/>

was descended from converted Jews.⁹⁹

Jews were marginal within socialism and communism, until the massive impact of Karl Marx. Before Marx, the only significant socialist Jew I could find was Moses Hess.¹⁰⁰ He influenced Engels before Engels met Marx, and then became at odds with both of them. Went on to be a pioneer of Zionism – but Zionism only became more than a marginal idea when it became clear that mindless hostility to Jews was a growing force, not a relic of the past.

Right-wingers attach huge significance to the Rothschild family, as do some left-wingers. To me, they just filled a slot that someone else would have taken without them. Had history gone otherwise and Christian Europe driven out all of its Jews, banking would still be there. And no Jews had even a shadow of the influence of the Medici family: bankers who became rulers of Florence. Who produced four popes and two Queens of France, and played a vast role in expanding the Renaissance.

Latin-Christian Europe transformed itself from the 16th century. Large numbers of talented Jews were unexpectedly pulled into the process in the 19th century. And something similar happened separately for Slavonic-Orthodox Russians, with many amazing novels by writers as different as Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. Also some science, notably Dmitri Mendeleev, whose Periodic Table was the first to successfully predict the properties of elements that others later discovered.

Only in the 20th century did the rest of humanity get drawn into the process. Changed by Europe’s aggressive imperialism, vast numbers of interesting individuals popped up in places that had seen nothing new for centuries. Quantum Mechanics included an unusual number of Jews – but Heisenberg with his undermining of reality was of Lutheran background, and flourished under the Nazis to an embarrassing degree. There were also some significant Hindus, Japanese and Chinese. And it is in China that the legacy of Karl Marx lives on most strongly and successfully.

Society makes us. But this does not mean that individuals must yield their distinctive views. They just need to respect majority opinion, and maybe try to change it.

My generation, the Baby Boomers, changed the world by being Bad Boys, and in smaller numbers Bad Girls. Did not appreciate that our parents had given us peace and a world of secure welfare. Shamefully, those benefits were taken away for the later generations by the selfish majority of Baby Boomers. Called ‘too expensive’, after many in my generation became holders of vast wealth and power.¹⁰¹

Being Bad Boys is simply destructive, and some of my generation took it to extremes. For instance Pink Floyd in 1979 with the famous cry “*We don’t need no education*” in the song ‘Another Brick in the Wall’.¹⁰²

If you are not ‘Another Brick in the Wall’, then just what are you?

Possibly a misplaced brick in a shoddy ‘Coolheart’ built by pop musicians. A wall that falls down and injures innocents.

Humans live within social structures. Humans would not be humans without them.

Humans can be turned into significantly different types of human if the structures shift.

99 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miguel_de_Cervantes#Controversy_about_ethnic_and_religious_background

100 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_Hess

101 <https://gwydionwilliams.com/about/777-backup-for-gwydion/030-human-dynamics/baby-boomers-to-blame/>

102 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Another_Brick_in_the_Wall

More of them become unhappy and destructive if social structures decided they should be left alone to swim or sink.

In fiction, when someone is required to ‘swim or sink’, they will gloriously flourish.

In real life, many will drown. Or end up as ruined and unhappy people.

Some become criminals - especially drug pushers and rapists.

Some become Islamic or Far-Right Terrorists.

Rock musicians were mostly hostile to Thatcher. But helped created a mood in which many saw Thatcherism as the only coherent way forward.

The idea was, ‘remove controls and the True Individuals emerge’.

Being ‘cool’ was part of it. So I have started calling them Coolhearts. Insulting overtones are entirely intentional, but done from a wish to ease human suffering. I have no wish to hurt individuals who are often lost and unhappy and locked into a false world view.

Coolhearts remain certain that the True Individuals will in time emerge. And are not bothered by wide differences about what True Individuals really are.

Individual Liberation at one time veered toward tolerance of under-age sex. In the 1950s, it was more accepted that homosexuality. In Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*,¹⁰³ the hero boasts of sex with an under-age girl – what would now be called Child Abuse, since she’s 15. There is gross racism from the ‘hero’. Homosexuals he will tolerate if they accept that they are entirely unworthy and should be quietly unclean out of sight of the Real Men. And he speaks of ‘the juggernaut of modern matriarchy’, made uneasy by the very limited powers of Big Nurse in the book. And finally the ‘liberated’ Native American is genuinely out of touch with reality and would probably starve and die after his escape.

The 1970s film version offended me enough to get the book for further checks. And I was amazed how much the film had cleaned up the original.

In parallel with the rise of Thatcherism, and less hostile to it than most people suppose, there was a struggle for homosexual status. First for toleration, then a sort of equality, and now in the west complete equality, including marriage.

The conventional view of this, and of the increasing normalisation of female equality, is that people suddenly discovering their real identity as True Individuals. I see it seems a series of accidents. And I broadly approve: but I am also a product of it. I can think outside the standard framework far more than most people, but I am still a product.

The standard view is a set of contradictions:

- I must not be supervised.
- Preventing me doing anything is a violation of my human rights.
- But also bad things must not be allowed.
- Anything I don’t like, isn’t freedom.
- Cheating is bad. But also good if the outcome is good.

In popular entertainment, people are mostly not shocked by rule-breaking and downright lying against ‘bad people’. All of this is fragmented Coolheart thinking.

The Age of Coolhearts liberated those of us who were already fairly secure. But damaged many others. We need to restore the duty to care for the needy.

In the Age of Coolhearts, the New Right was the most coherent product. It could justify rules as a path to an eventual Libertarian paradise.

And is falling apart, as it becomes obvious that the Libertarian paradise is not going to happen.

But opposition remains incoherent, mired in Coolheart thought.

103 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Flew_Over_the_Cuckoo%27s_Nest_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Flew_Over_the_Cuckoo%27s_Nest_(novel))

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