

Labour Affairs

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Local elections

It is a week away from the local elections that will take place in much of the England on 7th May. Almost two years ago, the Labour Party won a landslide 411 seats in the July 2024 general election. The polls for the forthcoming local elections suggest that Labour will be in third place in many wards and boroughs.

How can this change of fortunes have come about? Labour got into power in 2024 because the electorate felt that their concerns had been ignored by the previous Tory administrations under Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak. Many erstwhile Tory voters stayed at home or registered a protest by voting for Reform. It is remarkable that Starmer won so many seats while getting fewer votes for Labour in 2024 than Corbyn got in 2017. Such are the vagaries of the first past the post electoral system.

A constant, between the 2024 General Election and the upcoming 2026 local elections, is that large swathes of the electorate feel that they have been abandoned by both the Labour and the Conservative parties who are increasingly indistinguishable in the policies that they follow. The consequent sense of disillusionment with the party political system generally has now led to the extraordinary situation that the electorate will possibly reject the two party system and vote in large numbers for parties like Reform on the right and the Greens who are seen as centre-left to express their general frustration with the entire political process.

Reform largely tap into the perception that excess immigration explains why native born UK people face poorer working lives with high taxation and diminished services.

The Greens, in the past, have appealed mainly to those preoccupied with issues of climate change and identity politics. Until recently they never had more than one MP in Parliament. They would have made little headway against a Labour Party that addressed the concerns of its supporters. But, some two years into the current administration, Labour supporters feel that their party has little idea how to address those concerns. Many of those supporters are looking for an alternative party and will seriously consider voting Green in the May elections.

On the international front, Polanski has been prepared to describe the Israeli attack on Gaza as genocide. He also unequivocally condemns the US and Israeli attack on Iran. However, on Ukraine, he has never condemned the eastwards expansion of NATO that caused this war. British working people will suffer the consequences of high energy prices because the UK joined in the sanctioning of Russian oil and gas. Polanski has nothing to say on this.

We remain sceptical that the Greens would serve working-class interests any better than Labour. It has long been our view that Labour's central failure is its adoption of fiscal rules that severely constrain its room for manoeuvre. In his speech of 18th March, Polanski expressed reservations about Rachel

Reeves's fiscal framework and invoked the familiar argument that government finances are fundamentally different from those of a household. He is plainly aware that winning disillusioned Labour voters requires such rhetoric. But there is little reason to believe he has thought through what doing things differently would actually involve.

The clearest signal of the limits of "Zackonomics" is his approving citation of Olivier Blanchard — an economist whose career has been closely associated with IMF-style austerity and who has been no friend to expansionary public investment. Citing Blanchard while promising to break free of bond market discipline is a contradiction that Polanski has not resolved. One is left wondering whether, faced with a sterling crisis or a gilt market sell-off, his instincts would prove any more robust than Liz Truss's. Would a Polanski government ever consider ending the practice of auctioning bonds at market-set yields — the institutional mechanism that effectively gives financial markets a veto over fiscal policy? We doubt it.

In addition, a main reason that he is proving attractive to unhappy Labour supporters is that he is openly talking about a wealth tax. In his March 18th speech he proposed 1% tax on wealth above £10 million and a 2% tax on wealth above £1 billion.

In proposing such a tax, Polanski is taking up the idea of Gary Stevenson, a one-time successful financial trader in the City of London. Stevenson passionately believes that inequality is the main problem in British society. When Stevenson was growing up, it was assumed that all middle class people and many working class people would own their own homes. Now home ownership is a declining prospect for all but the wealthy. Stevenson proposes that a wealth tax will help reverse this state of affairs. Whether true or not, his argument has won over many on the left in the Labour Party. Since Polanski is advocating a wealth tax, many erstwhile Labour supporters may now vote Green in the May local elections.

It is an odd point in English politics. Local elections should be about how councils are dealing with local issues. But on May 7th many Labour voters who may be reasonably satisfied with their local Labour council will choose to vote Green to emphasise their dissatisfaction with Labour at the national level.

If they do so, they should do it, not because they have any great faith in Polanski's abilities or intentions, but because it is necessary to send a clear message to Labour MPs that the current administration has failed its supporters, on national and international issues, and that patience is running out.

The only party that consistently supports the working class interest and makes the link between austerity at home and imperialism abroad is the Workers' Party of Britain. Labour Affairs recommends that where a Workers' Party candidate is present you should vote for them.

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The Sahra Wagenknecht Newsletter

30 April 2026

This is Sahra Wagenknecht's newsletter. In it, I provide regular updates on my activities and current political issues.

The federal government has approved the draft budget for 2027. This includes the largest military build-up since 1945 and shameless debt accumulation. 200 billion euros in new debt – almost entirely for new weapons and the militarisation of Germany – is a wrecking ball for our country's future. Under Merz, interest payments alone will rise by 50 billion euros every year: that is a pure waste of taxpayers' money! Before the election, Merz said: "The challenges we face can be solved without additional taxes and without new debt." Merz will go down in history as the 'lying chancellor' who led the country ever further into decline. In an interview with WELT TV,¹ I discuss why the budget proposed by the CDU/CSU and SPD is a complete disaster and why the Merz government has no plan to tackle the economic crisis.

Core Values Commission established

The BSW's Core Values

¹ <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/video69f220ae-1922032097a2e663/sahra-wagenknecht-dieser-haushalt-ist-eine-einzige-unverschae-mtheit.html>

Commission has been established. I am delighted that we have succeeded in recruiting many renowned and expert figures from the worlds of academia and culture as members. With the Core Values Commission, we will have a real trump card up our sleeve and a highly competent body at our side, which will support the BSW in sharpening its profile once again and closing the glaring representational gap in the German party system. In a [joint statement](#),² the members of the Core Values Commission explain why the BSW urgently needs them politically and why they wish to advise our party on important policy issues in future.

Stop the arms race!

Germany's military spending continues to skyrocket: last year, the federal government spent a staggering 24 per cent more on weapons, totalling 97 billion euros. According to the Swedish peace research institute SIPRI,³ this puts Germany in fourth place worldwide; only the nuclear powers – the USA, China and Russia – spend more on the military. Instead of arguing over

² <https://9o3q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsEafzIYfjpFAOMqwsG08L/C2jDNKsZrNy9>

³ <https://9o3q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsFVLPhPSS15UuUViWdrYT/PS8SV6CGhpC1>

where to make the deepest cuts to citizens' incomes to finance this madness, the CDU/CSU and SPD should impose a moratorium on rearmament and freeze military spending at 2021 levels. That would be entirely sufficient to equip the Bundeswehr adequately for national defence. In this legislative period alone, a total of 276 billion euros could be saved. This would solve all budgetary problems in one fell swoop and render the planned cuts affecting families, pensioners and children unnecessary. Furthermore, substantial funds would be freed up to finally tackle the truly important tasks. Even a fraction of this money would be enough to renovate all the dilapidated schools in Germany.

Affordable housing for Germany!

It's beyond belief: whilst there is a shortage of 1.4 million affordable homes in Germany, the Merz government has committed to building "[affordable social housing](#)"⁴ in Ukraine. What's next: cycle paths in Kyiv? Enough is enough! The federal government must finally address the problems facing its own citizens! The fact that almost one in four tenants in Germany is now at risk of poverty is testament to the total failure of the CDU/CSU and SPD's housing policy. Instead of pouring vast sums of taxpayers' money into corrupt Ukraine, the federal government should urgently boost public and non-profit housing construction in Germany! We need a rent cap for Germany and a payment freeze for Ukraine!

Dictionary of War Readiness

The militarisation of Germany is being driven by a political and media campaign designed to accustom us to war as the new

⁴ <https://9o3q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsFvg7tpqo70fAYL6LcbGX/9nKt/Ww6y1Zj>

Editorials and articles at our website, by subject, at

<http://labouraffairsmagazine.com/>

Also <https://labouraffairs.com/>

Check what we were saying in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which still reads well. Web pages and PDFs at

<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/>

Or by subject at <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/m-articles-by-topic/>

normal. The author Leo Ensel has published a [“Dictionary of War Readiness”](#),⁵ in which he takes a critical look at the ubiquitous jargon of war preparedness. In this [essay](#),⁶ which is well worth reading, he describes what motivated him and why he dedicates the text to the younger generation, who would be forcibly conscripted and used as cannon fodder in the event of an emergency.

Please find below the article in which Leo Ensel presents his book ‘Dictionary of War Readiness’ mentioned by Sahra Wagenknecht:

Polishing Words – On the ‘Dictionary of War Readiness’

22 April 2026 By: [Leo Ensel](#) in [General](#), [Media Criticism](#), [Military](#), [Politics](#), [Reviews](#)

(Ed.) Our regular contributor Leo Ensel has published a book⁷ in which he critically examines the jargon of military preparedness currently wafting towards us from all corners and exposes it with peace-loving audacity. In this text, he describes what motivated him and what he aims to achieve, how he went about it and what conclusions he has reached.

“I’ll leave the polishing of words to you,” said the half-philosopher. “I care only for the truth.”

“Poor wretch!” cried the philosopher.

“Why, poor wretch?”

“Because now you must do without both.”

“Both?”

“Indeed. Even the truth.”

“Which one?”

“The truth about the truth.”

“And that is?”

“That it only shines through polished windows.”

(Günther Anders)

‘Polishing words’ – never is this more important than in times

⁵ <https://9o3q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af40iGsGQ0q6GFACvpQcAUAbKyb/rwLEhHLLzkec>

⁶ <https://9o3q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af40iGsGSLYlgdWlqzgfzrza4gf/xxuSDwSNHY0I>

⁷ <https://mediashop.at/buecher/woerterbuch-der-kriegstuechtigkeit/>

of war and pre-war! By now, it is long overdue. If only for hygienic reasons. The language is becoming more radical at a breathtaking pace; the tone grows shriller by the day. Whereas yesterday, according to Boris Pistorius, we were ‘no longer in complete peace’, just five days later Chancellor Merz dispensed with the soothing little word ‘complete’. Ursula von der Leyen still speaks, moderately by her standards, of a ‘fight’, whilst on the talk shows – ‘Five Chairs, One Opinion’ – there is incessant drivel about the ‘grey’ or ‘hybrid’ war that Russia (pardon: Putin!) is allegedly waging against us. Yet they are all merely panting after the avant-gardist with the class-prefect demeanour: Annalena Baerbock, who announced in clear German as early as 24 January 2023: “We are fighting a war against Russia!”

The ultimate goal of all propaganda – the dehumanisation of the opponent – has, in any case, long since been achieved; one need only look at the attributes with which, for example, the Russian president has been labelled by our mainstream media for years.

For the transformation of our entire society towards “war readiness”, the civil-military integration under “Operation Plan Germany” – currently still taking place secretly behind the scenes – is merely half the battle. In parallel, a ‘change of mentality’ or ‘new mindset’, a ‘shift in thinking’ or ‘cultural reprogramming’ is being openly and unabashedly demanded.

One means of implementing this as elegantly as possible is *language*. It is a truism that language shapes consciousness and thus, indirectly, our actions. *How* this happens, how we are all – more and more every day – to be accustomed to the unthinkable and reprogrammed as quietly as possible, is demonstrated – through the ‘polishing of words’ – by my ‘Dictionary of War Readiness’.

Woke Militarism

And this is sorely needed. For the new militarism presents itself, not least, as smart, gender-equitable and

TikTok-compatible. Spiked helmets and a barking Prussian tone of command are out. The postmodern force must be “woke & capable of self-defence” – inclusive of all minorities in our colourful, diverse society. The path to the (possibly final) war is not being forged by the clang of sabres, but by “strolling in trainers” – in the end, perhaps no longer following the German flag, but the rainbow flag.

And this has implications for language. Whilst the hardcore rhetoric (“will to fight”, “always an enemy”, “second Hitler” etc.) or the camouflaged bureaucratic German (“scalability”, “basic order”, ‘need for readjustment’ or ‘personnel depth’) are still fairly easy to see through, the situation is far more complex when it comes to the gentle accompanying and background music. Who would associate words and phrases like “absolutely mega!”, “baby”, “coolest clips”, “fertiliser”, “real”, “experiential”, “holistic”, “happiness”, “blazing core of embers”, “following my heart”, ‘my favourite toy’, ‘new feeling’ or ‘search for meaning’ – indeed, at the mere mention of ‘we’ – think first of ‘military prowess’?

Once your ear has become attuned to it, however, it wafts towards you from every nook and cranny. The current neglect of our language is taking place not least in a cosy, not to say: *coquettish* manner! Even a cursory glance reveals that a striking number of keywords dominate, evoking associations with ecological, even ‘woke’ ideas. Consequently, there is now talk of ‘sustainable resilience’, ‘greening the armies’, ‘technological ecosystems’ or ‘greater visibility’, ‘finding one’s place in society’, ‘marching through the queer field’ and ‘resilience’. Even Habermas’s jargon has now found its way into the current dumbing-down of the German language in the form of a call for ‘discursive competence’!

On the genesis

There was no master plan at the start of my ‘dictionary’. It simply cobbled itself together over time – the more my ear was sharpened, the

faster it went.

Many years ago, I used to leaf through Günther Anders' "[Visit beautiful Vietnam – ABC of Aggressions](#)"⁸ from time to time – a volume that, in the late 1960s, astutely dissected the idiom of Western reporting on the Vietnam War. Sometime in the spring of 2025, it occurred to me to take a closer look at the 'jargon of belligerence' currently wafting towards us from all corners. When I published the [first instalment](#) of my "dictionary" on the Swiss platform *Globalbridge* at the end of May, however, I had not the faintest inkling that this initial spontaneous, unsystematic collection would, just six months later, have grown into a major project, gathering some 450 entries between two book covers by the time of going to press. (As the ongoing series on [Nachdenkseiten](#) and [Globalbridge](#) shows, there are now 250 more.)

Of course, the exponential growth – 'surge'? – of the 'material' is only partly due to my now more attuned ear. The more the situation comes to a head, the more this society militarises itself, the more intensely language is exploited – that is to say: openly brutalised or – far more effectively! – *gently* violated. So I merely had (and still have) to set my sail or cast my net – the wind and the fish come of their own accord.

A 'psycholinguistic educational book'

I regard this small volume now before me not least as a *psycholinguistic educational book disguised as a dictionary*: on the sublime verbal techniques of contemporary war propaganda – which today elegantly calls itself 'strategic communication'. The fact that I am neither a linguist nor a psychologist does not bother me in the slightest. My aim was not, after all, to dissect the respective keywords down to the 'subsemiotic particle level' in an ideology-critical manner, as Dolf Sternberger, Gerhard Storz and W.E. Süskind [undertook](#) immediately after

⁸ <https://www.guenther-anders-gesellschaft.org/aktuelles/neuausgabe-von-visit-beautiful-vietnam>

the Second World War in their unsurpassed '[Dictionary of the Inhuman](#)'.⁹ It is quite enough to take the words at face value and give them a thorough, irreverent once-over! Or, to cheekily borrow from a classic: I make the fossilised – verbal – relationships dance by playing them their own tune...

It was crucial to me that the book – which, given that the threat of war affects us all, aims to appeal to as diverse a range of people as possible, across all generations and social backgrounds – should be easily accessible and a pleasure to read. Yes, despite – or rather, *because of* – the terrible subject matter, it should also be *fun* to keep rummaging through it! Accordingly, I have drawn inspiration neither from Sternberger's lucid 'Dictionary of the Inhuman' nor from Victor Klemperer's more epic '[LTI](#)', but, engaging in cheerful scholarship, have modelled my language and style on a canonical work of linguistic satire: '[Dummdeutsch](#)' by Eckhard Henscheid.

What's more: I regard my little volume as its anti-militarist counterpart – as a mercilessly peace-defying demonstration of the current warmongering "dumbing-down German"!

Young people

My little book is dedicated to the very young: to teenagers of both sexes born in 2008 and later – who have every right in the world to enjoy their lives, their youth (insofar as that is at all possible under current conditions).

To the young people (already battered by Covid), to whom we older generations are bequeathing not only a country in staggering decline, but also a mountain of debt running into the trillions and a planet in the process of being destroyed. To the young people who, moreover – at least as far as the men are concerned – will all have to undergo conscription from mid-2027 onwards.

And who, in the event of a 'deployment' or 'alliance',

⁹ <https://de-academic.com/dic.nsf/dewiki/1530802>

would even have to risk their lives – naturally no longer for the 'fatherland', but this time for the *community* – in other words: who, like the (often no longer so young) Ukrainian and Russian soldiers today, would be *sacrificed*. Senior military figures are already speaking openly of thousands of 'casualties' – meaning the dead and the seriously injured – per day. And a historian has the audacity to call on parents, in full view of the ARD audience, to 'sacrifice' their children.

I very much hope that these young people, who are (still) unharmed in body and soul, realise with all due seriousness: *it is they who will be the first to be hit!*

"NO!" and crunching sand

There is only one alternative to all this: in the face of the absurd threat of war, the rearmament bordering on madness, and a completely uninhibited cohort of politicians and journalists who are cheerfully driving us all, ever faster every day, towards the abyss, we *must* – against all odds – still manage to ensure that old *and* young, peace activists *and* climate activists, people of all religions together with agnostics and atheists, with doctors, lawyers, rebellious military personnel, teachers, trade unionists, (skilled) workers and artists – not forgetting the 'woke scene' – finally take the peace mandate of the Basic Law at its word and not just say "NO!" but – each in their own place – dare to engage in civil disobedience and become a spanner in the works of war preparations. We have only this one option for the future!

Let us take from this what also defines the 'sound' of my little book:

[Friedensfrechheit!](#)

Peaceful Free Thinking!

Leo Ensel: "[Dictionary of War Readiness – War Means Killing](#)", Promedia Verlag (Vienna), ISBN 978-3-85371-563-5, Price: €20.00

New police powers

“to protect communities from disruption caused by protests”

We quote in full a government statement on demonstrations. It is another effort to deny people the right to demonstrate against the genocide taking place against the Palestinian people, by banning ‘repeat demos’, as if the demonstrations had to stop even if the situation has not changed.

Police forces will be authorised to consider the ‘cumulative impact’ of protests, assessing previous activity when deciding to impose limits on protesters.

Police forces will be granted new powers to put conditions on repeat protests as the Home Secretary orders a fresh look at how protests are policed and organised.

The new powers, which will be brought forward as soon as possible, will allow senior officers to consider the ‘cumulative impact’ of previous protest activity.

If a protest has taken place at the same site for weeks on end, and caused repeated disorder, the police will have the authority to, for example, instruct organisers to hold the event somewhere else. Anyone who breaches the conditions will risk arrest and prosecution.

The Home Secretary will also review existing legislation to ensure that powers are sufficient and being consistently applied. This will include powers to ban protests outright, and will also include provisions in the Crime and Policing Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said:

“The right to protest is a fundamental freedom in our country. However, this freedom must be balanced with the freedom of their neighbours to live their lives without fear.

“Large, repeated protests can leave sections of our

country, particularly religious communities, feeling unsafe, intimidated and scared to leave their homes. This has been particularly evident in relation to the considerable fear within the Jewish community, which has been expressed to me on many occasions in these recent difficult days.

“These changes mark an important step in ensuring we protect the right to protest while ensuring all feel safe in this country.”

The government will make the improvements by amending sections 12 and 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 to explicitly allow the police to take account of the cumulative impact of frequent protests on local areas in order to impose conditions on public processions and assemblies.

Further details will be set out in due course.

Policing Minister Sarah Jones visited Lambeth police HQ yesterday to see the Metropolitan Police’s response to yesterday’s protests where almost 500 were arrested. Most of those arrests were made for supporting the proscribed group, Palestine Action.

The minister spoke to Metropolitan Police leaders on the challenges of the protests and how new technology like live facial recognition could help in the future.

The Home Secretary will also write to chief constables today, thanking them for their swift and professional response following Thursday’s terrible attack and at

protests across the country. She will encourage them to use the full range of powers available to them to prevent and respond to public disorder.

Following the Yom Kippur terrorist attack in Manchester, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Steve Reed has written to local authorities encouraging them to use their existing resources and powers to ensure Jewish communities are protected in the coming days and weeks, including limiting protest activity as much as possible.

All police forces in England and Wales are working with the Community Security Trust to reassure and offer additional support to the 538 different synagogues and Jewish community sites across the country.

Today’s announcement builds on measures already in the Crime and Policing Bill going through Parliament to support the policing of protests:

banning the possession of fireworks, flares and other pyrotechnics at protests

criminalising the climbing of specified war memorials, making it clear that such disrespectful behaviour is unacceptable

banning the use of face coverings to conceal a person’s identity at protests designated by the police

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-police-powers-to-protect-communities-from-disruption-caused-by-protests>

Competitive Parliamentarianism Isn't Essential for Democracy

By Gwydion M. Williams

- Parliaments of the rich, for a rich minority
- Elections as a path to Civil War
- Humans are not natural democrats or natural sharers

Parliaments of the rich, for a rich minority

England has been parliamentary since the 14th century. But only in 1688 was it settled that the monarch could not rule without a parliament.

This was still something quite different from democracy. Reform in 1832 of a unified British-Isles House of Commons gave the vote to about one in seven adult males. The Upper Middle Class, and a few of the richer among the middling middle class. Only in the 1880s was voting extended to a male majority. (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/40-britain/665-2/>). And in the wider British Empire, only white males ever got significant electoral power in regional assemblies. Assemblies still subordinate to the Imperial Parliament, which is what British America had rebelled against.

That Imperial Parliament didn't actually exclude the small number of non-white males then living in Britain. Roman Catholics might vote but not be elected as MPs until 1829: many historians doubt it could have been done after the extension of power to an English middle class that was mostly hostile to Catholics. And Jews who would not convert could not be MPs till 1858.

Also remember that the House of Commons had to balance its wishes against the House of Lords, which often included the Prime Minister. From 1721 to 1900, 18 Prime Ministers were peers of the realm and 16 were members of the House of Commons. Many from the Commons went to the Lords after stepping down, but only Benjamin Disraeli had an additional term as a Lord.

The last was Robert Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, whose final term ended in 1902. Sir Alec Douglas Hume served briefly after resigning his peerage and getting elected after a helpful Tory stood down in a safe seat. Curiously, this was only possible because Tony Benn had got the law changed to go on serving as an MP when he inherited a peerage. Politics then were different, with jokes about him being 'the reluctant peer'.

This history gets forgotten. Our politicians and pundits treat Competitive Parliamentarianism as compulsory for all states from any civilisation. It is hardly ever recognised as an originally undemocratic system. One that was only slowly changed to include the bulk of the population.

And democratic voting does not in practice mean parliaments doing what the majority want. A majority in Britain and the USA want the

rich to pay more taxes, and certainly never wanted the rich to be paying *lower* rates of tax. In the USA, a majority want gun control: but it does not happen.

In Britain, movements towards democracy centre themselves on the House of Commons and voting rights. It was not the only possible route. Presbyterianism had a nested set of elected bodies, with congregations choosing their elders and those elders choosing more senior authorities. It dominated Scotland until the Protestant religion declined, and was for a time strong in England. It also reminded me of the Soviet system of indirect elections of committees and higher committees.

In its inclusion of guidance by the elderly and pious, Presbyterianism was also similar to Iran, which does however have direct elections for their President and Parliament, though Western media avoid mentioning this.

All sorts of different things could have happened just in Britain. So it is foolish to demand that the rest of the world copy us.

Elections as a path to Civil War

Competitive Parliamentarianism works when the differences between electable parties are not seen as worth dying for. So

it failed in the USA, which says 'Congress' for something like the English system. The southern slave-owning states felt they had a right to secede, and the north fought a long and costly war to suppress this. But note that neither side felt that African-Americans were fit to vote, any more than they would accept women as responsible adults until 1918. It was just that slavery was seen as degrading to both owner and owned, as indeed it generally was. (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/52-usa/both-sides-were-racist-in-the-us-civil-war/>.)

In the 20th century, British parliamentarianism failed in Northern Ireland, precisely because Irish Unity and a state with a Roman Catholic majority was seen as an issue worth dying to prevent, or worth dying to achieve. It remains in limbo, with a system of enforced power sharing. Non-sectarian British parties do not put up candidates in Northern Ireland.

Party politics led to the secession of what was once East Pakistan, as it had earlier split British India between the domains of the Congress Party and the Muslim League.

It split Sri Lanka, with the regional Tamil minority being crushed by the Sinhalese majority. They then got aggressive with a small unoffending Muslim minority.

Hostility to Muslims is a growing aspect of party politics in the Republic of India, which also uses an ambiguous law to jail anyone who dares speak of even peaceful secession of any part of the Republic of India. The ruling BJP protects the unfair share of income taken by the rich by getting ordinary Hindus worried about cruelty to cows and about Muslims taking their women.

Yugoslavia was mostly seen

a model country under Tito's tolerant Communist Party. Competition in open elections got each of the nationalities convinced that one or more of the rest were oppressing or exploiting them. The much-admired practice of training the whole population in irregular warfare showed that it had an inherent dark side.

To cap it all, I've written at length about how an initially mild split in Ukraine was widened between those in the east who saw themselves as kin to Russians, and those in the west who blamed Russia for their eclipse after the Mongols took Kiev in the year 1240. And who conveniently overlooked that what's now East Ukraine was a conquest by Moscow of what had been Ottoman slave-raiding territory, and which was never part of Kievan Rus. (<https://mrgwydionmwilliams.quora.com/Pro-Russian-Ukrainians-Ignored-by-the-West>.)

Humans are not natural democrats or natural sharers

Though I call myself a Post-Leninist Marxist, one major thing I disagree with is the label *Primitive Communism*. It is indeed true that humans began as tribes without private property, classes, or a state. But tribes also did not recognise other tribes as properly human or as having the same rights. Engels does indeed mention this in his famous book, but in my view does not think it through.

I'd see the original condition as *Family Collectivism*. The family shares, and can occasionally admit outsiders to the family – needful especially to prevent inbreeding. Food is basic and there are fights for food-yielding territory, for hunting, farming, or fishing. We see the same in many animals, including chimps.

My view is that when humans began organising into units larger than tribes, Family Collectivism easily slid into a fractured society with class inequality. The idea of a common citizenship comes much later. It was common to have several categories of citizenship, based on a mix of wealth and ancestry. Very much the case with the Roman Republic, where the voting system gave a huge advantage to the rich. (<https://mrgwydionmwilliams.quora.com/Rome-s-Undemocratic-Republic>.) When Rousseau called himself a Citizen of Geneva, he was claiming membership of the highest of several categories of male inhabitant. And may in fact have lost it as a wanderer after accepting charity from the Roman Catholic church.

It was also the case that most civilisations did not suppose that democracy could exist for anything larger than a city. The normal assumption was a ruling family that had somehow inherited merit and had a right to rule. This still applies in much of the world.

Meantime China is very content with a system where everyone has a vote, but only the Communist Party has a significant role in translating those votes and wishes into actual politics. I'd say it represents their wishes at least as well as the Indian equivalent ever did. The current elected governments of India are worryingly far from what liberals were expecting from Competitive Parliamentarianism.

An earlier version of this article appeared as a blog: <https://mrgwydionmwilliams.quora.com/Competitive-Parliamentarianism-Isn-t-Essential-for-Democracy>.

Many other blogs I've done are listed by topic: <https://mrgwydionmadawc.com/my-blogs/>.

*To mark the passing of Lord Robert Skidelsky on 15th April 2026,
we reproduce one of his reflections on the war in Ukraine.*

Four Years Later

Robert Skidelsky reflects on the Ukraine War, February 2026

‘War should be approached with much prudence, reverence, and calculation, and that includes the propaganda which is its messenger.

‘Our power of prediction is so slight, our knowledge of remote consequences so uncertain, that it is seldom wise to sacrifice a present benefit [i.e., peace] for a doubtful benefit in the future.’ Moreover, ‘it is not sufficient that the state of affairs we seek to promote should be better than the state which preceded it; it must be sufficiently better to make up for the evils of the transition.’

John Meynard Keynes, quoted by Lord Skidelsky

<https://robertskidelsky.substack.com>

Note: See below some reflections of mine on the 4-year war in Ukraine. Interestingly enough, no one in the UK would publish it. It's still taboo to argue that the West had any responsibility for either starting the war or continuing it at incredible human cost.

Also, four examples of paranoia, which would be amusing if they did not carry a lethal charge. On 25 February 2026, The Daily Telegraph wrote that ‘Russia tunnels immigrants into Europe... as part of its hybrid war on the West’. The same newspaper asked on 2 February: ‘Was Jeffrey Epstein a Russian agent luring world leaders with girls?’ An alternative interpretation, advanced by Philip Giraldi, portrayed Epstein as a Mossad agent. A fourth example comes from Tom Tugendhat (The Times, February 23 2026), who claimed that ‘The Epstein files suggest a network of hostile states at the heart of our own government that demands action to protect the King, the country and our government’.

Four years after the so-called full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it is very

hard to disentangle oneself from all clichés, lies, and reflexes in which the war is entangled. I have never lived through a ‘full-scale war’, nor served as a soldier in any war, big or small, so perhaps it was always thus. The Nazis greatly admired British propaganda in WW1 and Goebbels used it as a model. The great sin in war is to be objective, and this lesson has been well learnt by the protagonists in this one—the Russians, Ukrainians, and Ukraine’s proxy allies in Europe and (till recently) Washington.

The great danger in forswearing efforts at truth is that what is imagined may come to pass, with the lies leading to the truth of a ‘full-scale’ war.

In the case of Ukraine the ‘news’ points my feelings and my intellect in different directions. On the one hand, one reads almost on a daily basis about the suffering and heroism of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians—of relentless Russian bombing, of kidnapped children, of schools forced underground, and of course the testimony of Ukrainian refugees. The atrocities of the Russians, ventilated wherever possible, arouse one’s moral indignation.

But I have long since learnt that courage and suffering, while rightly evoking admiration and pity, do not of themselves validate the cause for which they are incurred. An action can be brave without being good; suffering is piteous without being necessary.

We remember our war dead as having given their lives for freedom; the Germans remember theirs as victims of tragedy. Yet the soldiers on both sides fought equally bravely. Russian troops have also fought bravely in the Ukraine war, but we are never, or rarely, asked to admire their bravery, because their cause is deemed evil.

One can say a lot about ‘cause’. In legal terms, the Russians ‘caused’ the Ukraine war by invading an independent country. They should not have done so; there were better, more patient ways of wooing Ukraine back into the Russian fold, where bits of it had lived for centuries. In current lingo, the Russian response was ‘disproportionate’[.

In addition, it was a miscalculation. Supposedly started to prevent Ukraine joining NATO, it has added two new members to the Alliance, and made most of Europe anti-Russian. Conceived as a ‘special operation’ lasting a few weeks, it has turned into the biggest war on the European mainland since 1945.

But efforts at truth would also acknowledge that the USA, Britain, and NATO provoked Russia to its action by actively working to prise Ukraine from Russia’s orbit in order to complete their victory in the Cold War.

And does the West bear no responsibility for a war lasting years, with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, dead or injured on both sides, and much of Ukraine’s economy in ruins? Did they not promise Ukraine ‘all it takes’ for victory over Russia? Would not the war have ended years ago but for such promises? Was the cause of what the West defines as Ukraine’s independence worth the cost in lives? Will the probable outcome justify the deaths, bravery, suffering?

A few of us, in this country, as well as on the Continent of Europe and in the USA, have been calling for a negotiated peace almost from the day the war started. We have resisted the comparison between Putin and Hitler. We have simply been cancelled. Nothing must be allowed which will weaken

the national resolve to stand by Ukraine. Press self-censorship and disinformation in this proxy war have equalled, and even exceeded, that during the ‘real’ war against Hitler. Now Donald Trump has broken up the united front. Russia, he says, was not the cause (or at least the only cause) of this ‘unnecessary’ war. And for that he has been excoriated by all right-thinking people in our part of the world.

I am driven once more to reflect on the mature wisdom of an essay

by the young John Maynard Keynes when he was a student at Cambridge in 1904. War, he writes, should be approached with ‘much prudence, reverence, and calculation,’ and that includes the propaganda which is its messenger.

‘Our power of prediction is so slight, our knowledge of remote consequences so uncertain, that it is seldom wise to sacrifice a present benefit [i.e., peace] for a doubtful benefit in the future.’ Moreover, ‘it is not sufficient that the state of affairs we seek to promote should

be better than the state which preceded it; it must be sufficiently better to make up for the evils of the transition.’

Was the humiliation of Russia sufficiently bad in 2022 to justify its invasion of Ukraine? Was the situation in Ukraine sufficiently bad in 2022 to justify its resistance? Above all, was the state of affairs which the West sought to promote sufficiently better to justify it provoking Russia and prolonging this dreadful war for four years?

Palestine Links

[In Gaza, life flickers as power cuts shatter livelihoods and healthcare \(Nada Nabil in Gaza City, Middle East Eye, 29 April 2026\)](#)

[ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan describes threats from David Cameron and Lindsay Graham in new interview \(Imran Mulla, Middle East Eye, 29 April 2026\)](#)

[New petition seeks ‘accountability’ from UK over role in Israel-Palestine \(Alex MacDonald, Middle East Eye, 29 April 2026\)](#)

[Gaza’s disarmament trap: Israel’s continued attacks and aid restrictions made a mockery of the ceasefire \(Muhammad Shehada, +972, 29 April 2026\)](#)

[Palestine football appeals Fifa decision to do nothing about Israeli clubs in illegal settlements \(Middle East Eye, 29 April 2026\)](#)

[‘Extraordinarily far-reaching’ Palestine Action trial gets underway in Germany \(Hanno Hauenstein, +972, 28 April 2026\)](#)

[Israel’s relentless pursuit of ‘total victory’ has entangled it in an unwinnable war with Iran, eroding legitimacy abroad and deepening moral decay within \(Meron Rapoport & Ameer Fakhoury, +972, 24 April 2026\)](#)

[More than 1,600 candidates in UK local elections make major pro-Palestine pledge \(Imran Mulla, Middle East Eye, 26 April 2026\)](#)

[New Zealand high court strikes blow against investments in Israeli occupation \(Ali Abunimah, Electronic Intifada, 22 April 2026\)](#)

[“The shooting was not in the air”: Testimonies from the Flour Massacre \(Khaled Al-Qershali, Electronic Intifada, 20 April 2026\)](#)

[“The whole world has to isolate this rogue apartheid genocidal maniac serial-killing pathological-lying state” \(Abby Martin, Peace & Planet News, Spring 2026\)](#)

[Turkey says Muslim countries concerned by Israel-Greece-Cyprus alliance \(Ragip Soylu in Antalya, Turkey, Middle East Eye, 19 April 2026\)](#)

[Israel’s largest land grab since the Nakba \(Tamara Nassar, Electronic Intifada, 16 April 2026\)](#)

[Can a renewed Joint List of Israel’s four Arab parties survive until Israel’s elections? \(Samah Salaime, +972, 14 April 2026\)](#)

[Israeli army shoots, kills 9-year-old girl in her Gaza classroom \(Nora Barrows-Friedman, Electronic Intifada, 10 April 2026\)](#)

[The humiliating ordeal of traveling abroad as a West Bank Palestinian \(Ghaith J, +972, 7 April 2026\)](#)

[A brief history of the Israeli nuclear program, the open secret at the heart of the Iran war \(Anna Illing, Mondoweiss, 5 April 2026\)](#)

[Marjorie Taylor Greene’s Statement Condemning Trump \(Scheerpost, 5 April 2026\)](#)

[Israel is implementing its Gaza strategy in Lebanon: turning ‘buffer zones’ into permanent borders \(Qassam Muaddi, Mondoweiss, 4 April 2026\)](#)

[They already shoot us for no reason. Now they have a death penalty \(Jared Hillel, +972, 31 March 2026\)](#)

[In the West Bank, protective presence is not protecting anyone anymore \(Charlotte Ritz-Jack, +972, 27 March 2026\)](#)

Notes on the News

By Gwydion M. Williams

- * **Iran – Regime Still Standing**
- * **False Belief as a Root of Evil**
- * **Iran: Not My Sort of Regime**
- * **China and Compromise**

Snippets

- * **Taxing the Rich**
- * **Ukraine – Predictable Disaster**
- * **Intelligence Is Many Different Things**

Iran – Regime Still Standing

British pop singer Elton John can't have many followers in Iran. But his song **I'm Still Standing** would be apt for the ceasefire stand-off we have. An impasse after the six-week war waged by the USA and Israel. Someone should post a version to social media.

I noted early on how well they were doing:

“At the time of writing, 24th March, Iran can still reliably hit Israel. Thankfully, it seems their genuine religious faith would not let them use nerve gas, anthrax spores, or one of the many infectious diseases bred for germ warfare. Something that Saddam [Hussein of Iraq] thought about but did not carry through.” (<https://labouraffairs.com/2026/04/01/notes-on-the-news-47/>)

They avoided being a weak copy of the West, which Saddam's Iraq was.

I had not foreseen that they'd keep their missile power and sea power through till the 8th of April, when Trump called a cease fire.

When the going gets tough, the guts go missing: someone should remould the popular song to Trump's failure. And it's not just Trump: there were 'chickenhawks' serving previous Presidents. There are still some very tough US citizens, but their numbers diminish. Fade as commerce becomes dominant, just as classical philosophers warned.

As at the 23rd April, Trump keeps extending the cease-fire. Iran remains defiant. *They Are Still Standing*.

False Belief as a Root of Evil

If political liars are bad news, politicians in the grip of violent delusions are far worse.

“At a ceremony in Jerusalem marking Israel's Memorial Day for fallen soldiers and victims of terror attacks, PM Netanyahu said that 'Iran's ayatollah regime planned another Holocaust' and that had Israel not acted 'against this existential threat... the names of sites like Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan might have joined those of the Nazi death camps – Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka.’” (<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2026-04-21/ty-article/.premium/israel-marks-memorial-day-as-bereaved-families-urge-politicians-to-stay-away/0000019d-aedb-d45b-a39f-efdbd9820000>).

Natanz etc. are in Iran. Iranian Jews live peacefully, and even have their own representatives in Iran's powerful parliament. Historically, Jews were mostly safer among Muslims than among Christians. And the numerous Jews in the Ottoman Empire were free to move to Jerusalem or to other lands of the ancient Kingdom of Judea: lands split between several political units under the Ottomans. Or to the former heartlands of the Samaritans, Hebrews who rejected the interpretation of their faith upheld by the men who returned from Babylon and rebuilt the Jerusalem temple.

Who became Jews, but H G Wells in his *Short History of the World* notes how Carthaginians in the Iberian Peninsula suddenly vanish, and Jews suddenly appear in the same places.

People claim that Israel is looking to ancient history. But the northern half of the West Bank was a foreign territory where Jewish rulers sometimes controlled hostile population of the Samaritan faith. People who later converted to Christianity or Islam: yet now it is earmarked to become 100% Jewish as soon as Israel can get away with it.

Western politicians keen to defend inequality against leftists had the bright idea of endorsing

the foolish idea that anyone criticising Israel must be guilty of antisemitism. Netanyahu, about to be thrown out by his fellow Zionists for accusations of influence-peddling, realised that this would allow Israeli troops to be much more brutal to Palestinian women and children than they had dared be before. The concept that people previously sympathetic to Zionism might just be asking for ordinary decency was rejected as a logical impossibility.

As for the grand tragedy of Jews in World War Two: the mass killings began when the British Empire decided not to make peace after the Fall of France. Early on, shipping Jews somewhere beyond Europe was seriously talked about. And many of the killings that did happen were of Polish Christians who were educated. Who were seen as future leaders of a nation Hitler was out to erase.

It is also an odd truth that most of the British cabinet were thinking of offering more than Hitler was thinking about settling for. Maybe his biggest blunder was to be arrogant in victory and fail to get this message through to the British public, who were certain at the time that he was determined to conquer and subjugate them. (See <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/how-hitler-might-have-had->

[a-victorious-peace/.](https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/how-hitler-might-have-had-a-victorious-peace/))

But it is part of human nature to believe that ‘others’ have evil intentions for no other reason than that they are evil. The Russian Republic in 2014 accepted a plea from ethnic-Russian Crimea to be annexed after riots drove out the elected pro-Russian President who had overturned the first Orange Revolution in 2010 (<https://mrgwydionmwilliams.quora.com/Ukraine-Punished-For-Rejecting-US-Values-in-2010>.) Yet this happening convinced many Finns that they were in danger of being invaded by the Russian Republic. They ignored the fact that Finland had been allowed to stay safely neutral after they had been allied with Nazi Germany in World War Two. Ignored that the Soviet Union under Gorbachev abandoned Lenin’s dreams of indefinite expansion, abandoning East Germany and Middle-Europe. Or that Yeltsin in 1991 then dissolved the entire Soviet Union, which only the Baltic and Caucasian republics were moving strongly to leave. Somehow the panic spread.

But not all by itself. The USA has been actively spreading mistrust, with ‘Upper London’ and most other Western politicians encouraging this.

World Peace was a real prospect in 1991. But with the Soviet Union gone, it turned out that Western elites

had never lost their taste for dominating the rest of the world. And most ordinary Westerners get pulled along with it, despite mostly having good intentions.

Iran: Not My Sort of Regime

Remember the time when the ‘wise persons’ of the New Right were sure that Iraq could be remade as a perfect capitalist parliamentary democracy? When weaklings like Tony Blair and the Clintons treated this folly as Deep Wisdom?

Myself, I was one of the few who said that Saddam’s Iraq was the main prospect of Iraq becoming Westernised. My main fear was that they’d make the sort of weak collaborationist regime of the sort occupying much of Africa. That didn’t really come off.

I’ve denounced the whole trend of Western politics from the 1990s. Called it foolish and failed, as well as morally bad: see <https://gwydionmadawc.com/my-forecasts-over-past-years/> for specific predictions. These include calling the 1987 riots by Black Britons ‘reformist riots’, though I didn’t actually expect to see a black woman as Tory leader. And in 1989, I said that the Chinese Communist Party was still strong and might keep power for decades.

For Iran, I was one of the minority of leftists who said in 1979 that something new

had begun, and that unfortunately it had shoved aside both leftists and pro-Western liberals. That it was foolish to pretend it was an oddity and would soon end. Hiding from unwelcome truths did no one any good. In its own terms, terms accepted by a hazy majority of ordinary Iranians, it is still doing OK.

“The economic performance of Iran since 1979 cannot be easily categorized as a simple success or failure. It is an economy that has proven remarkably resilient, building new industries and achieving scientific progress under duress. However, this has come at a tremendous cost. For the average Iranian, the past four decades have been defined by the erosion of purchasing power, chronic unemployment, and the constant pressure of inflation, leaving the country’s vast potential largely unrealized on the global stage.” (DeepSeek)

(Note that DeepSeek does not mention the sanctions regime that has been applied ruthlessly and relentlessly on Iran and explains much of its difficulties.)

Part of a wider trend - the Republic of India has moved further towards Hindu intolerance since its elite lost confidence in socialism. Elsewhere, we are dismayed to find that Buddhists can be as intolerant as any other religion.

All of this is the fruit of greed and foolishness in the 1990s (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/the-west-fails-in-five-civilisations/the-west-fails-in-five-civilisations-2/>).

One World might have been possible in the 1970s, though it was hampered by foolish fears of

actual state authority. It won’t be back on the agenda for decades, if ever.

China and Compromise

International Law is quite clear on the issue. There is only one Chinese state. It includes Tibet and Xinjiang and Taiwan. (The US **acknowledges** the Chinese position that there is only one China and that Taiwan is part of China.)

Western media tend to mislead with words that are not quite lies. China *says* that Tibet is Chinese, indeed. But unlike the rival claims to Kashmir, to call it a mere claim would be as misleading as saying that the USA *claims* that Alaska is part of the USA. Tsarist Russia sold its European claim and you could reasonably say it should have been left to its native Inuit, but the facts under International Law are clear enough. Just as they are for the rest of the USA, and Canada also.

This is separate from what we might see as a just outcome. International Law has never had a superior body that can enforce it. Nazis were punished because they were defeated, and though I agree they mostly deserved it, it degraded the law to pretend Nuremberg was a fair tribunal.

And it happened at the same time as real villains like Klaus Barbie were being helped to safety by the US government. As were vast numbers of criminal pro-Nazi Ukrainians, placed in Canada since Jews and Polish Christians might have gone after them in the USA.

Goering should not have been condemned for the mass killing of Jews, because there is genuine doubt that he knew that deportations had turned into extermination. Nor for terror bombings, given that Allied

bomb commanders had done exactly the same.

International Law can be successfully defied, as it was with India using its army to create Bangladesh. But that’s just one of many cases of successful acts of military violence changing the realities of International Law.

Almost the whole of International Law reflects past successful acts of military violence. That’s the bald and bitter truth.

Annexation is a forceable seizure of territories that a particular state had not previously claimed. Which means that it is nonsense for the Wikipedia to say that Tibet was annexed: the current Dalai Lama was part of a long tradition of High Lamas being given rule over the Tibetan Plateau by whoever ruled the Chinese civilisation-state at the time. Tibet was ignored only when it had no coherent overall government.

(<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/42-china/tibet/the-truth-about-the-dalai-lama/> has more on this. Including how the Central Government stepped in when three successive Dalai Lamas were presumed murdered by their Regent when they should have come to power.)

‘Han’ is a hazy term embracing most of the citizens of China’s civilisation-state. It includes those with a language descended from the Old Chinese that existed at least 3300 years ago. Regional ‘dialects’ are no more similar than English and Norwegian, and less so that Polish and Russian. But they do have a common written language, the Oracle Bones from 1250 BC, with a script long evolved from its original pictograms. And a script independent of the spoken language, which has helped keep

unity.

Non-Han mostly speak some other language, though the Hui speak the same languages and are defined by being Muslim. And significantly different from Muslims like the Uighurs who speak various languages of the Turkic language family – mostly not mutually intelligible between named groups. But most of them also see themselves as part of the Chinese civilisation-state.

The Dalai Lama evades this, or is ignorant. In one of his books he speaks of the ‘Tibetan calendar’; but I recognised it as identical to the Chinese zodiac system, in which it’s been the year of the Fire Horse since February 17. And experts agree it began in the Han core, though it is sometimes used outside of the Chinese civilisation-state. It’s definitely wrong to claim it as Tibetan.

Taiwan was annexed by Japan in 1895. This was recognised under International Law, since the weak Chinese state had submitted to it. Different from the pseudo-independent state called Manchukuo, which few accepted. But the Soviet Union was one, from 1941, as part of a successful strategy of keeping Japan neutral while the Soviets held and eventually defeated Nazi Germany. Why Hitler tolerated this is a puzzle: another of his massive blunders in world politics.

What the imperial powers had defined as Outer Mongolia within China briefly had an unrecognised independent government under very corrupt traditional rules. It then had a Communist revolution with Red Army support. Chiang Kai-shek recognised it after 1945, and then reneged when he falsely blamed the Soviets for losing the Chinese civil war. But Mao confirmed the original deal as part of a

wider negotiation with Stalin. Meantime Inner Mongolia acquired a non-Mongol majority, and no one seems to care much.

Taiwan was seized by the USA after 1945, along with other parts of the Japanese Empire. And it could have been given its own independent existence, as happened to the two halves of Korea under US or Soviet supervision. But the USA during the war had already decided to award it to China, assumed to remain under Chiang Kai-shek. The Soviet Union had no part in this, since at the time it was not at war with Japan. It joined at the very end, and their decisive defeat and overrunning of the much-feared Kwantung Army that occupied north-east China may have done as much as the two atom bombs to make Japan surrender.

Both in Manchuria and Taiwan, many of those who had lived under the brutal Japanese rule said that the newly arrived Kuomintang were worse. You get this in Jung Chang’s *Wild Swans*, the excellent book she wrote before switching alignments after the Soviet collapse. (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/42-china/42-1-chinese-politics/a-review-of-mao-the-unknown-story/>).

The Kuomintang after 1945 lost control of their economy, with inflation helping destroy them. I was surprised to find this not mentioned in an otherwise-excellent Chinese series about undercover Communists in Shanghai ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rebel_\(Chinese_TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rebel_(Chinese_TV_series))). A series you can watch with subtitles on Amazon Prime, at least in the UK.

The Kuomintang transferred much of their government and army to Taiwan, and Chiang Kai-shek kept promising to reconquer

the mainland. There were Westerners in the 1950s and early 1960s who seriously believed this. I’d suppose that this evaporated when Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, throwing the state into chaos but without a single sign of any movement within China that wished to be identified as against Mao. Yet it still took till 1971 and Nixon’s peace mission for the Taiwan regime to lose China’s superpower seat at the United Nations. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_and_the_United_Nations.)

Deng Xiaoping came up with ‘one country two systems’, first for Hong Kong when the bulk of it was due to return to China in 1997. (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/46-globalisation/46-1-more-on-globalisation/opium-city-the-story-of-hong-kong/>) But there was Tory trouble-making. They missed the chance to build up one of the local Westernised Chinese as the last Governor of Hong Kong: it remained London’s show to the end. Out of 28 governors, 14 were born in England, 5 in Ireland, 4 in British India, 3 in Scotland, 1 in Wales and 1 in Germany. All had British or Irish parents. ChatGPT claims that Robert Brown Black was born in Hong Kong, but that’s a definite error.

The last and worst was Chris Patten, put in to make trouble. And he managed among other things to rule a fair chunk of a large Chinese group called the Hakha without having the faintest idea they existed. One of many absurdities I learned from his smug book on his time there.

Hong Kong citizens continued after 1997 with the same economy, and some rights to

criticise. I ineffectively warned them when they were going too far, and that they were doomed when mainland liberals distanced themselves (<https://www.quora.com/q/pwgwxusqvnzrlzm/Hong-Kong-Committing-Suicide>). Naturally, they were closed down politically. Economically, they are still protected and useful.

The pro-independence party in Taiwan is being used as grist to the US global mill, and China has demonstrated that it would be quite easy to ruin the island by blockading it. And even before the mess in Iran, the current leader of Taiwan's largest political party had visited Beijing and made a distance from the fools seeking a confrontation they must lose:

"Xi tells Taiwan opposition leader people on both sides of strait are Chinese in rare meeting" (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/apr/10/xi-jinping-cheng-li-wu-china-taiwan-meeting-beijing>)

Snippets

Taxing the Rich

Taxes are the way to control the super-rich. This was done successfully from the 1950s to 1980s, with economic growth that was at least as good as what we've got since.

Letting billionaires and multi-millionaires control politics hurts everyone else. Many inherited their wealth, and the self-made turn out to have done most of their useful work before becoming billionaires. In IT, most of them took things that many people were working on: they were good at making money with their version. (See <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/before-2018/labour-affairs-before-2014/business-success-a-mix-of-skill-and-luck/> and <https://>

mrgwydionmwilliams.quora.com/Real-Creators-and-Unworthy-Billionaires.)

Bill Gates stayed with what was then the IBM Personal Computer project because his mother was an old friend of a top IBM executive. And then companies he had no connection with cloned the IBM model, so Microsoft got its present dominance.

And he's one of the better super-rich.

*

Ukraine – Predictable Disaster

Many of the US elite are growing sick of the Ukraine War. A corrupt government keeps the war going, but cannot win it. So we have things like this:

"In March 2014, Henry Kissinger warned against Ukraine becoming a pawn in a competition between NATO and Russia, as this would tear apart Ukraine and redivide Europe for decades:

"Far too often the Ukrainian issue is posed as a showdown: whether Ukraine joins the East or the West. But if Ukraine is to survive and thrive, it must not be either side's outpost against the other—it should function as a bridge between them... The west is largely Catholic; the east largely Russian Orthodox. The west speaks Ukrainian; the east speaks mostly Russian. Any attempt by one wing of Ukraine to dominate the other—as has been the pattern—would lead eventually to civil war or break up. To treat Ukraine as part of an East-West confrontation would scuttle for decades any prospect to bring Russia and the West—especially Russia and Europe—into a cooperative international system" https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/henry-kissinger-to-settle-the-ukraine-crisis-start-at-the-end/2014/03/05/46dad868-a496-11e3-8466-d34c451760b9_story.

[html](#) (pay site)

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Intelligence Is Many Different Things

There was a time when skill with arithmetic was a prime mark of intelligence. Humans were the first computers, and I can remember when it was common to say '*electronic computer*'. You can find this as a linguistic living fossil in a 1955 Asimov novel called *The End of Eternity*, where 'Computers' are the planners and their machines are computaplexes.

Other bastions of human intelligence have been conquered, included word-skill and some sorts of understanding. But to me, it has always been likely we have various different centres for different tasks (<https://mrgwydionmwilliams.quora.com/A-Thousand-Brains-We-Think-as-a-Collective>).

And a recent mainstream science paper says something similar :

"A.I. has always been compared to human intelligence, but that may not be the right way to think about it. What it does well can help predict what jobs it may replace...

"When he told various chatbots that he needed to take his car to a repair shop that was only 50 meters away and asked if he should walk or drive, the bots told him to walk." <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/15/technology/how-jagged-intelligence-can-reframe-the-ai-debate.html>

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I write regular blogs - <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams>. I also post a lot on X (Twitter): <https://x.com/GwydionMW>

Was Fianna Fáil 'slightly fascist' in the 1930s?

By Brendan Clifford

James Connolly was the only Labour leader in the British state who was explicitly Marxist in his general framework of understanding and who engaged in revolutionary action against the State. He was killed for his revolutionary attempt by a Coalition Government which included the founder of the Labour Party, Arthur Henderson, who was in the process of bringing various Labour organisations together to operate as a Parliamentary Party.

Henderson had been conducting labour activity under the political aegis of the Liberal Party, which was specifically the party of capitalism. It was the party of Progress, which meant the development of ever freer capitalism. It was also the war-party.

Capitalism and War went together in British development.

The Tories were the party of reaction. They did not drive Capitalism towards complete domination of economic life, with all that entailed in social life.

When Capitalism was set free to follow its own bent, by a powerful Liberal agitation, in the 1832 Reform, the Tories set about imposing curbs on it by means of the Factory Acts.

Fifty years later, in conjunction with a dissident

Liberal development in Birmingham, they projected a social welfare reform for the purpose of saving Capitalism from being undermined by its own freedom.

The Liberal policy for ameliorating the stresses of free capitalism was Imperialism. The English masses were to be fed by cheap food brought in from the Empire.

The Tories, who had merged with the social-reform Liberals under the name of the Unionist Party, considered imposing limits on the expansion of the Empire, and settling the world into five or six major regions which would acknowledge each other as legitimate. The Liberal Party rejected that policy and won a landslide victory in the 1906 Election.

War was declared on the bogus issue of Belgian independence in 1914.

Ramsay MacDonald of the Independent Labour Party tried to raise an agitation against it. But working class feeling, under Liberal ideology, was so strongly pro-War that he could only hold protest meetings under protection by the police.

James Connolly described the War as an act of Imperialist dominance by Britain with the immediate object of destroying the German nation in the British capitalist interest. He

published material showing that the German working class was an active element of the German nation, and had acquired a substantially autonomous place for itself in the order of the state, and for that reason Liberal Britain wanted to destroy it because it gave a bad example.

And he organised an Army. And he took part, along with a bourgeois Army, in an act of Insurrection against the British State in Ireland.

Did Henderson have any spark of class affinity with Connolly when the War Cabinet, of which he was a member, decided to kill him?

Connolly was killed as a nationalist, whereas Henderson was an internationalist—in other words, an Imperialist.

A few months later the Liberal Party proved that it had been wrong to launch the World War, whose only rational purpose could be the establishment of unquestioned British dominance of the world. It broke itself in the undertaking. Lloyd George, who aspired to be a top-down revolutionary, became Prime Minister, ousting Asquith from the leadership with the support of the Tories, but carrying only half of the Liberal Party with him.

There were then two Liberal Parties, meaning in effect that the Liberal Party

had destroyed itself under the stress of the Great War it had launched.

Arthur Henderson detached himself from the Liberals, established the Parliamentary Labour Party in their place (with Ramsay MacDonald as Leader), and made it His Majesty's Opposition by coming second to the Unionists in 1918. It became the Government-in-waiting through no effort of its own. It had been under tutelage by the Liberal Party: and the Liberal Party crumbled around it.

It had not fitted itself for government by party-political struggle. It was put in that position by the suicide of the Liberal Party, and it did not know what to do when—a few years later—the Liberal residue put it in power as a Minority Government (1924), and many of them came over to it to show it what to do when in power.

The Empire was at its greatest ever extent when Labour became the Official Opposition. What was its policy, or strategy, for the Empire which it would have to govern?

It could not be anti-Imperialist, in the sense of discarding the Empire, because a situation had come about in which the Empire was integral to British life, and it knew that that was the case.

The ruling circles which had introduced democracy—general adult Parliamentary franchise—did so on the ground that the mass of the people—the democracy, so to speak—had become enthusiastic Imperialists on the understanding that their quality of life depended on a daily supply of cheap goods from the Empire.

But the Empire could not just be let tick over and supply the goods by routine. Because of

the vast territories conquered in the War, and the general disruption of pre-War routines by the War, the Empire had to be governed actively. And active government needed some purpose to guide it.

The War Coalition led by Lloyd George won the 1918 Election. It had some ideas of how the world it had won should be governed. But that Government fell when in 1922 the Turkish nationalists (who had been allied with Germany) rejected the Treaty that had been imposed on them in 1919, and made good their rejection by effective military resistance.

Whitehall called on the Empire to return to War in order to compel the Turks to accept their Treaty. The Empire did not respond. The Unionists withdrew from the Coalition.

There was a return to party politics, with no party knowing what to do—least of all the Labour Party.

Labour won the 1929 Election and formed a majority government. When faced with the great crisis of Capitalism in 1931 it formed a Coalition—a National Government—with the Tories. The Unionist Party had been calling itself the Conservative Party since the fall of the War Coalition in 1922—perhaps signifying that the process of merging social reform Liberalism and Toryism was complete.

But the new Tory Party was less resourceful than the old one was, and it was no more able to deal with the crisis of capitalism than Labour was. What happened was that the two parties called off the party conflict at elections, so that it would not play into the economic crisis and drive it to extremes. [That was the era of

national socialist politics on the Continent.]

The Labour element which tried to keep up the party conflict was marginalised.

It seemed to me, when I tried to make sense of the inter-War period, that that was how Fascism was warded off in Britain and a kind of nominal democracy was maintained. The Party structures were retained while conflict between them was cooled down by hierarchical agreement, and there was National Government which marginalised Party conflict without establishing an authoritative Nationalist Party.

That kind of thing was not possible in the array of new states, set up by Britain on the Continent via the Versailles Conference of 1918-19. They were fragments of the former Hapsburg Empire, but were discouraged from making alliances on the basis of common ancestry; and the most important of them had little sense of nationality.

In order to be functional they had to establish for themselves the substance of the status that Britain's heedless remaking of Europe gave them in form. They had to establish authority in the State and nationality in the citizen.

This development, whether democratic or authoritarian, involved anti-Semitism. (Jewish writers at the time explained the rise of active anti-Semitism by the British decision to break up the Hapsburg Empire—in which Jews had a place—and replace it with a series of new states in which the Jews did not have a place. And that explanation was widely accepted.)

In 1917 Britain accepted the claim of some Jews that Judaism was a nation, and that it had

national rights in Palestine. This applied to Jews wherever they might be, and it set them apart from the nations in which they lived. And in 1939 the Oxford War Pamphlet on the subject said that in future the Jewish population, being of an alien nationality to its host nations, must be kept below a certain percentage, because otherwise there would be anti-Semitism as a natural consequence.

Europe became fascist between the Wars for sufficient reason. The nation-states in form set up by Britain had to become nation-states in substance in order to be functional. Authority and nationality were missing from them at their inception because they had not evolved.

International Socialism was pressing on them from the Soviet Union. The Communist International was organised in their midst, but it was unable to take over and establish a Dictatorship of the Proletariat. However, its influence was such that there was a widespread sense that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat across national boundaries was the next step in normal development. But what happened was national socialism.

Europe became fascist. Britain warded off Fascism by informally suspending the conflict of political parties, which is a de facto requirement of democracy, while maintaining it de jure. (I argued this case in the pamphlet, *Union Jackery**.)

Nationalist Ireland maintained a system of party-political democracy from 1932 onwards, once the Treaty imposed on it by Britain in 1922, under threat of war, was cast off.

Madawc Williams seems to question this in a complicated

paragraph in the April Labour Affairs:

“It is better to think of the Nazis as an extreme in a general metamorphosis that began before 1914 with the right-wing Republicanism of Imperial Portugal. Created a new Polish state under Pilsudski, who like Mussolini had been part of the socialist Second International before 1914, and whose mildly anti-semitic system was seen at the time as a variation on the fascist theme. And it was variously expressed without using the word Fascist in Britain’s National Government, the USA’s New Deal, and de Valera’s Fianna Fáil, which literally means Soldiers of Destiny. De Valera’s main foes self-identified as Fascists.”

As far as I can figure this out, it says that Fianna Fáil was mildly fascist but that his opponents went the whole hog and declared themselves fascist.

I don’t know in what way the New Deal might be regarded as ‘slightly fascist’.

The case with the National Government is that it stopped party conflict.

But what is it about Fianna Fáil that entitles it to be called slightly fascist? Is it the word ‘Destiny’ in the translation of the party name?

Fianna Fáil repealed the Treaty Oath, by means of which Britain broke the Sinn Fein party in 1922, dismantled the Republic, and caused a ‘Civil War’ by threatening an Imperial war of conquest.

The Treatyites then formed themselves into a fascist party and adopted the policy of replacing the Parliamentary system of party-politics with

a vocational form of corporate state. Fianna Fáil did not try to exclude the fascist party from the democracy. It defeated it consistently within the democracy by means of policies which engaged the populace in purposeful action, probably using the word “destiny” at times. And the democracy was not less a democracy for allowing a fascist party to operate in it. Suppression of the fascist party by the State would have ended Democracy as surely as its triumph at the polls.

It is odd that, while Madawc mentions Pilsudski in this paragraph, he makes no mention of James Connolly. Connolly, like Pilsudski, held that the nation was the social form within which Socialism could be developed, and he specifically mentioned Pilsudski as the Continental socialist with whom he agreed. What passed itself off as international socialism he regarded as mere imperialism.

Connolly was dead before the great revolutions and counter-revolutions began, but there is little doubt that the strain of socialism he brought to the national insurrection was a component of the national democracy later established by Fianna Fáil.

For more on this, see Union Jackery: the pre-history of Fascism in Britain. ISBN 0 85034 112 X. 84pp. Also available as a free PDF: <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/unionjackery.88pp.pdf>

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of its industries, undermined our manufacturing and productive industries, castrating our society and adversely destabilising proud working-class traditions, culture and way of life.

Our country needs the state to guide the economic life of the country in such a way as to promote work, to respect the dignity of labour, and to serve the working people. All adults have a duty to work in a useful fashion, according to their talents and abilities, and society has an equal duty to ensure that useful employment is available to all, part-time or full-time according to the domestic, health and life constraints of the worker.

Foreign policy

We seek amity not enmity with the rest of the world. The populist Right and the major parties objectively serve imperialism. What is imperialism? Imperialism has been described by our members in their own words here. One of our members, Rob, says very well that:

Imperialism, known as the highest stage of capitalism, is essentially a global economic system of financial domination by a handful of wealthy countries, backed up by military power.

The supporters of imperialism have tried to whip up nationalist and militarist fervour in Britain. They won't do the fighting but they expect working class boys and girls to go into harms' way, often poorly equipped and for the wrong reasons. These bloody proxy wars are waged in order to deflect attention from crises at home. Foreign adventurism and political grandstanding have drained the country of the funds and energy required to deal with serious problems in our social and economic infrastructure, in public services and in maintaining a sense of security in our communities.

Labour and Tory alike support imperialism. Be in no doubt. Our mission is to replace the Labour Party, not to compromise with it, in order to restore working class power and representation after four decades of neo-liberalism and militarism that have brought us closer to national collapse. If you are anxious about the cost of living and high interest rates, we will show you the link between these attacks on your standard of living and the foreign policy of successive Labour and Tory Governments.

When a 'Labour' Leader praises Margaret Thatcher, you know something has gone very wrong with the alleged party of the workers. When that same 'Labour' Leader endorses, through inaction, the bombing of a civilian population in Gaza with property damage proportionately worse than that over Cologne and

Dresden and then refuses a ceasefire after thousands of deaths of children, then we are on the edge of seeing pure evil masked in your name.

But let us be clear, we are not pacifists and we are not weak-kneed liberals. The British establishment has made this country highly vulnerable to nuclear and terrorist acts and organised crime. We will increase some security expenditures especially in support of our soldiery and law enforcement.

We share the frustration many working-class women at the ridiculous intersectional ideology of radical liberals and we want a much clearer debate on Net Zero. A stop must be called to the attempt to tell us what to think and feel.

A halt must also be made to the attempt to make working people pay for subsidies for large-scale green industrialisation. We must shift the emphasis towards industrialisation through new technologies, especially healthcare technologies, that serve the people.

So, where we have a candidate, vote for the Workers Party of Britain. Where we do not have a candidate, do not vote for Labour, the Greens, the Tories or the Liberal Democrats.

We are a democratic, accountable and transparent Party that involves its members in policy formation. We are your Party.

Socialism and socialist history

The Workers Party is a socialist organisation. We stand on principles and will not give these up, one by one, in the misplaced hope of a truce with our enemy.

The Workers Party stands with all those that have attempted to break free of imperialist domination and build a different kind of world. We defend the achievements of the USSR,³ China,⁴ Cuba⁵ etc, not least the debt owed by humanity to the Soviet Union and Red Army⁶ in their war of liberation against German fascism. Our finest hour as a nation was when we stood side by side with Soviet Russia and defeated German Nazism.

We categorically reject the attempt by the ruling class, its paid agents and the EU imperialist bloc to rewrite history⁷ so as to equate the Soviet Union with Hitlerite Germany. We shall defend the positive historical legacy of the Soviet Union as well as all those today who struggle for socialism; for an alternative world order.

3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zckrEKgXm4M>

4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecB4tjv2oJA>

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcQqzXu2PxM>

6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zckrEKgXm4M>

7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNdOdyPxkt4>

Vote for the Workers Party in the May elections

Here is the Workers Party of Britain's 10 Point Programme, as adopted at its founding in 2019, followed by the manifesto.

Workers Party of Britain – Ten Point Programme

An end to imperialist wars and financial domination, starting with withdrawal from Nato.

Rebuild British industry and abolish the anti-worker 'rationalisation' that puts profits ahead of people to provide useful, secure jobs for all in decent conditions, with living wages, paid holidays, sick leave, maternity leave, etc.

Decent, cheap, secure housing for all.

High-quality, free pre-school childcare and education, followed by high-quality, free, lifelong education and vocational training.

Free and comprehensive healthcare with no waiting lists, accompanied by easy access to cheap and nutritious food.

Public, high quality laundries, crèches and dining facilities that enable women to take part in work and public life without prejudice or physical barriers.

High-quality, free provision of all necessary support services for the disabled, as well as the elderly. Full state support to enable families to look after their elderly, with nursing homes and sheltered accommodation for those in need of it, so that all workers are able to live full, dignified and meaningful lives.

Universal access to a cheap or free fully-integrated public transport system and all essential amenities: water, sanitation, heating, electricity, post, telephone, internet.

Open and easy access to all forms of culture and the media.

A government that prioritises giving resources to the solving of urgent problems such as the need to live sustainably and protect our natural environment, putting science at the service of the people.

Who are the working class? It is the 99%. The workers are anyone who has to sell their labour power for wages.¹ What does that mean? It means that if you have to earn wages, do jobs for money, you are a member of the working class.

Yes there are various categories, degrees, wage differentials and those who cannot work for whatever reason within that class. Yes, an engineer earns a rate that is different to a locum doctor, a touring musician, a part-time barmaid, but all work for wages. We are a home for all of them. Not a home for the billionaires, the elite. And when you can no longer work for whatever reason, unless you have your feet up on a Caribbean island sipping drinks under the shade of a coconut tree, you're still a member of the working-class, whether you are a disabled worker,² or a retired worker etc.

Nearly everyone in Britain who is not in a position of power over their own destiny has to go out and earn wages or live off the ever decreasing aid available from the welfare state.

The Workers Party of Britain emerged out of the complete abandonment of the working class majority of Great Britain by Labour. Labour are Labour in name only. Labour do not represent the workers, they serve the elite, the class that does not work: the ruling class. But Labour likes to pretend it is on the side of the workers. It has stolen the name "Labour". *Labour is the wolf in sheep's clothing.*

Economics

The Workers Party believes in an economy that works for working class people, the vast majority. The workers create all the wealth in society; build the houses, man the hospitals, power the machinery, everywhere you look workers designed, planned, built, maintained or operated the things society needs, yet they do not get their full share. Private interests have run the jobs and the country down. Big private interests step and squash small private interests. The jungle law of capitalism is that the strong take from the weak. We believe in the importance of a planned economy, in a directing role for the state to ensure jobs, industry and the country work fairly. Free-market fundamentalism has gutted Britain

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRytFIPL3HI&list=PLSpxOr53YbHQ23ZcTdr1O-T5CJ3Izvor-&index=6>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgluJ-tnRP0>

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