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The Tragic Failures of Spontaneous Politics

by Gwydion M. Williams

Artificial Intelligence: Some Issues

by Mark Cowling

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Tragedies and the Tragedy of the Commons

“The tragedy of the commons is a situation in a shared-resource system where individual users, acting independently according to their own self-interest, behave contrary to the common good of all users by depleting or spoiling the shared resource through their collective action. The theory originated in an essay written in 1833 by the British economist William Forster Lloyd, who used a hypothetical example of the effects of unregulated grazing on common land (also known as a ‘common’) in Great Britain and Ireland. The concept became widely known as the ‘tragedy of the commons’ over a century later.”¹

That’s the Wiki summary. And the article has a lot about ‘non-governmental solutions’ as a way of avoiding it.

Vast amounts have been written on these, and I have read many.

I find them generally foolish and unrealistic.

‘Non-governmental solutions’ work *sometimes*. But mostly when individuals have been shaped so that certain types of thinking are suppressed. And they are unready to see these as limits on freedom. Only *unfamiliar* constraints are seen as oppression.

In all modern societies, a strong state machine guided by a determined government have done most of the constraining and suppression. Our supposedly free Anglo tradition is *entirely* based on it.

English settlers in North America brought these limits with them and the new United States re-imposed them on fringe Frontier elements who had lapsed. And in New England, Puritans for a time ran a much harsher set of limits that England imposed after the failure of Cromwell’s experiment.

But what existed after Cromwell was markedly different from what existed before. And both before and afterwards, the state was able to overturn local customs in a way that didn’t happen in Continental Europe until the French Revolution.

The English originally had a way of life imposed on them by the Wessex state that fought off the Norse invasion.

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragedy_of_the_commons

A state which was made much more authoritarian by the Normans. The English ruling class – at that time not hampered by any important share in power by ordinary English people – then imposed a version of it on the Welsh and Irish.

When ordinary English people *did* get power, their thinking had already been shaped to a particular set of values. Compared to past versions of Englishness, it is more different than most people born since 1970 are aware. More different than most Baby Boomers will now admit – I am in a minority in insisting that there *was* drastic changes. And that many of them were due to Baby Boomers getting selfish as they gained prosperity and power.

In 2015, I wrote a study arguing that 1930s Conservatism had far more in common with 1930s Italian Fascism than it has with Conservatism as of 2015, or even 1990.² It has changed further since then, moving away from Thatcherism but remaining selfish and tricky.

But for all that, this British consensus covers a fairly small range of the actual extent of human possibilities.

Most of the world knows of our way of life, though partly in the USA’s modified version of it. Most play football, and those once part of the British Empire generally value cricket. English has become the language everyone learns to speak with anyone else from a different language tradition. Yet increasingly, they are reviving their own customs and respecting their own past. Including things that Anglo left-liberals see as infringements of freedoms. Rights that they are baffled to see other humans not accepting as natural or desirable.

Dumping the Westminster System into an alien society fails, because those societies have not had centuries of a ruling class defining a particular way of life for them. So Japan remains alien. India and Turkey and even Poland and Hungary go off in un-English directions despite a decent operative version of this Westminster System. China, which ignored it after a pathetic failure of their version after their 1911-12 Revolution, is now much less alien in the actual way the society works.

Were China suddenly given the chance to directly elect a President, the victor might well be the grandson of

2 <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/against-globalisation/the-left-redefined-the-normal/>

Mao. This would match the rest of Asia, where very large numbers of recent or current leaders are the offspring of previous leaders. And matching the unexpected triumph of Napoleon the Third to replace France's Second Republic.

The Westminster System is also not a system that guaranteed fairness or democracy or harmony. The Catholic Irish after centuries of being crushed remained different enough to want their own state, and to fight and die for it. But what exists now is obviously very different from what Gaelic Ireland might have evolved into had it modernised as other European states have modernised.

In Scotland, it was Normans who had married into Scottish families who fought off a conquest by the English monarchy. But Scotland had similar values, based mostly on Saxon settlers who became Lowland Scots. Who were otherwise similar to other Saxons and Angles who became English thanks to the expansion of a state originally based in Wessex.

Scotland was also entirely unable to settle, killing far more of its monarchs than the English ever did. James the 6th of Scotland was the first of a series of Kings called James to reach old age. One of a minority of Scottish kings not to die a violent death. And it was also Scots neglected by his son Charles the First who tipped the balance in the so-called English Civil War.

People mostly assume that their own cultural constraints are 'natural' and not imposed. Just as they assume their own use of language is 'natural', and get confused when others misuse it, or use a valid but unfamiliar dialect. Or speak some completely different language.

I've done a detailed study of how native English speakers apply a whole host of complex rules that they would be unable to describe in terms a foreigner could follow. You'd speak of '*a large blue lorry*', rather than a '*a blue large lorry*', because to you it feels natural and inevitable. But other languages are often quite different. I've done a very detailed study, *The Muon and the Green Great Dragon*, showing how very different this is from the laws of physics.³

In the modern world, spontaneous organisation works within a secure society where individuals have lots of spare time. The Wiki is one such, and I've been a regular contributor. Likewise Quora.⁴ But my work on these has been made possible by a secure working life in which unemployment was unlikely. In which I got a nice pension from my employer, in a generous scheme that was closed to new employees soon after I joined in 1991.

I was born in 1950, part of the Baby Boomer generation. And we didn't '*waste the world's wealth and leave nothing for the kids*', as some young people now think.⁵

It is no accident that they have been taught to think this. Almost anything to hide the basic truth that the richest 5% in the West have got most of the extra wealth made since the 1980s.⁶ And most of that has gone to the richest 1%.

3 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/in-a-hole-in-a-hole-dwelt-a-nothingness/>

4 <https://www.quora.com/>

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

6 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/before-2018/2017-magazine/2017-06-magazine/2017-06-do-the-richest-5-earn-it/>

The world's wealth has not diminished: we increased it massively. We also noticed the threats to the environment that older generations had mostly missed.

We also greatly extended the range of sexual freedoms, on most matters. A much harsher view is now taken of under-age sex and sexual harassment, which are freedoms for the aggressors but not the victims.

But seeking liberty, we left it open to the rich to grab an unfair share of the wealth that we all helped create. And most of my generation now vote Tory. They seek to deny to later generations the benefits my generation had.⁷ And just the same in the USA.

The obsession of 1960s radicals was to remove the risk of State Oppression. Which was real enough, on sexual matters where we are now happy with a wider area of freedom. And on drugs, which was probably an error. But we Boomers gave later generations freedoms that most seem unaware of. Tolerance and now near-equality for homosexuals was secondary: it followed logically from the wider freedoms that the heterosexual majority chose to give themselves. Particularly equal sexual freedom for women as for men, which isn't *entirely* established, but has advanced enormously.

We massively under-estimated the danger of the rich and greedy running out of control. Failed to realise that weakening state authority gives most long-term gains to the rich, the greedy and the unscrupulous.

Little Man Lost

People were sold the fantasy of a self-regulating economy. An economy that is ideal for wealth-creation. On this basis, commercial profits are exactly what the individual merits. Taking it by tax is robbery.

But this is not what actual New Right governments have tried to create. Partly because it actually could not work, in my view. But also because political parties need funding. MPs can legitimately grow prosperous if the rich approve of them and may wish to co-opt them.

Even within the limits of the possible, it has always been the interest of the rich that get favoured at the expense of the much-voiced needs of the 'Little Man'.

Should I have said 'Little Person'? Not really. Partly because it is an idea I aspire to sink, rather than update to a modern version. But the defenders of 'economic freedom' were mostly resisters of female equality. Socialists and in particular communists and fringe anarchists did most of the hard work and unpopular pioneering work.

But I was talking about economics. In the real world, New Right governments never have acted as if they believed their nominal creed. Note the repeated failures to ensure that rich companies pay money they owe, which ruins many hopeful start-up ventures.

Both in Britain and the USA, big corporations are mostly being rescued in the Covid-19 crisis. Small businesses are mostly being allowed to collapse.

Will they be fooled again?

Almost certainly.

You could break your heart trying to make them see

7 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/editorials-from-labour-affairs/2020-06-editorial-starmer-under-fire/2020-06-baby-boomers-and-modern-politics/>

things differently. Many well-meaning people have done just that. I consider it a waste of time. I am as likely to influence them by scorning them as anything else. And assuredly they will not break *my* heart.

To expect some intelligent politics to emerge to defend the small producers is to ignore 300 years of Anglo history in which this repeatedly failed to happen. Elements of it were genuinely present in Fascism, but mostly went along with ignorant racism and an enthusiasm for conquest and warfare.

European Christian Democracy, founded by authentic anti-Fascists but taking in many ex-Fascists, managed some sort of defence up till the 1970s. Have had it eroded since then, but the traditions have not died. They have not been as bad over Covid-19.

New Right governments also show complete belief in the power of the state to run the economy when the rich might get hurt. There was a vast surge in public spending in the half-forgotten crisis of 1987, which those born since 1980 will probably be unaware of.

The ruling elite make sure that most of you remain unaware of it. People are free to tell the true version, but in a world flooded with attention-grabbing options they are seldom noticed.

Historic facts that don't suit the current elite get repressed in practice, without any formal ban. One recent incident is a film called *The Young Karl Marx*.⁸ In Britain it didn't get the art-house showing that most such films get. And if an English-speaker orders it on DVD, they need to be careful to get a version with English subtitles, which are mysteriously absent from some of the versions sold through Amazon.

One example out of many.

Most people also don't know that the Soviet Union was very successful economically from the 1930s to 1960s.

Most people don't know that the Second World War was largely won by the Soviet military. That it could not have been won by the USA unless they'd been willing to sacrifice several million of their young men, rather than less than half a million as actually happened.⁹

In the 2008 crisis, Obama was persuaded that giving money to banks rather than ordinary people would let them magically multiply it and benefit everyone. This was a garbled version of Fractional-reserve banking,¹⁰ and not relevant when the banks and hedge funds risked collapse. But it happened. The rich retained their wealth. Vast numbers of small businesses collapsed, sometimes killed by banks defending their balance-sheets and the value of their shares.

Nationalising the banks would have defended the accounts of ordinary people, and dumped the cost on the very rich, who had caused the crisis by speculating. But the ideology had been sold to vast numbers of trusting people. It still has a grip on their mind.

For more on the actual success of tax-and-spend, I've done a long study: *Feed-the-Rich Economics*.¹¹ Explaining

8 https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1699518/?ref=mv_sr_srsq_0
9 For details and sources, see *West Ignoring VJ Day, when Imperial Japan surrendered* (<https://www.quora.com/q/pwgwxusqvnzrlzm/West-Ignoring-VJ-Day-when-Imperial-Japan-surrendered>.)

10 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractional-reserve_banking

11 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/>

how the Mixed Economy won the Cold War, and then was denounced when the rich felt safe.

Note that when such ideas got applied from the 1980s, vastly more money went to the very richest, but the economy did not grow any faster. Maybe slower.

And on social matters, most people failed to realise how many useful things had been done without the big bad state oppressing it. Often being helpful.

I vividly remember an office conversation between people about 20 years younger than myself, wondering if it could be true that there was once a stigma in Britain about couples living together. There was, and if you get DVDs of programs made in that era you ought to notice how far it was questioned. You might even encounter the now-obsolete phrase 'living in sin', which meant a man and a woman living together and having sex just with each other, but not married. Something *now* viewed as boringly normal, but it was a shift from older attitudes.

There was also once a whole class of jokes about the Wedding Night, assumed to be the first time the newly married couple would have sex. If you view the 1970s series *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?*, a woman about to be married is only semi-open to a close female friend about already having had sex with her future husband.

Step back to the mid-1960s original, *The Likely Lads*, and it is different again.

And that was Britain, at that time more tolerant about sex than the USA, and much more so than the Irish Republic. As a young man, I heard a lot from my Irish friends about how solidly conservative it was. As indeed it was, on my first visits, though it seems even this was softened from what it once was.

Had I suggested in the 1960s and 1970s that Ireland in the first two decades of the 21st century would not just legalise homosexuality but vote strongly for gay marriage, no one would have believed me. Likewise no one would have expected an openly gay Prime Minister, though a non-white man with a foreign-born father would have seemed more plausible.

(For those unfamiliar with Ireland, this was Leo Varadkar,¹² PM from 2017 to 2020. And perhaps PM again some time, since he still leads one of the big Irish parties.)

In fact I said no such thing, and I admit to being slow to accept equality either for gays or for women. I like to think about basic social values, rather than being a dedicated follower of fashion. And when I do change, I like to put it on record that it was a **change** and not a newly discovered truth about Unchanging Human Nature. Not something that the fashion-follower 'always knew', even if their recorded words unfortunately said otherwise.

People change.

'Unchanging Human Nature' isn't what it used to be.

I mentioned earlier my brief summary of how many things changed just in 20th century Anglo Norms, calling it *Reinventing Normality in the 20th century*.¹³ Noting

[problems-magazine-past-issues/the-mixed-economy-won-the-cold-war/](https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/the-mixed-economy-won-the-cold-war/)
12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Varadkar

13 <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/against-globalisation/>

that most of these were pushed by the left – centrists and rightists mostly practiced freedom selfishly until it became safe to be open.

Moderation in all things, including social justice .

I believed at that time that Spontaneous Politics was the answer. But what's happened since has made be re-think extensively.

It has not made me scuttle back to conventional thinking, which happens for some ex-leftists. I can see some merits in the Old Order, but many more faults.

If they say **'was it so bad?'** I would answer **'yes, it decidedly was bad!'**. Especially if you were not a white male able-bodies heterosexual who matches the admired Nordic type. I happen to be all of these things, but can also empathise with those who were once shut out. Who are still not fully admitted.

There is also no surviving functional conservatism in Anglo culture. Just a bunch of right-wing nihilists. Thatcher was a silly loud-mouth who did immense damage to all of the things she quite genuinely wanted to save.

I was hopeful in the 1960s and 1970s that Spontaneous Politics would fix it all. In the decades since, I have had to conclude it is not so easy.

Star Wars: the Nordic Generation

Improvements happen. But the convention is to play this down.

Star Trek was a 1960s breakthrough. It looked to a better future, though admittedly one rather similar to the 1960s USA. A vision similar to the works of Arthur C. Clarke, with a collectivist economy under a very mild and tolerant state system.

Star Trek was a 1970s breakthrough. But though it appears to be our own future, and may have been so in early drafts, it actually rejects this in favour of a struggle for virtue in an unchanging universe. Has princesses and sword-like weapons. And each film begins with the words **"A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away..."**.

Flash Gordon was an influence. One of many that mixed imagery from the past and the expected future.

Star Wars had a much more modern vision of the future.

But it also began as an all-white adventure.

I tried asking on Quora if anyone had done a study of how the *Star Wars* franchise had moved from Ideal Nordics as heroes to something more modern. Everyone who replied seemed baffled by the question, which I take as an indication that the culture has successfully stopped most people from thinking about the changes since the 1970s. But in the first film, the line-up of heroic rebel pilots is entirely Nordic and Leia is the only female seen to fight, rather than be a political leader. And she never seems to be very effective, mostly needing one of the Leading Men to save her.

It is still all-white Nordic rebels in *The Empire Strikes Back*, and the major non-white character they add is a shifty person with unwelcome designs on Princess Leia. Only in *Return of the Jedi* does it become somewhat like the racial mix in the USA, and with aliens as pilots and in

[the-left-redefined-the-normal/](#)

command. Also Leia is still the only female fighter: only in films made later did women and alien females get more combat roles.

Star Trek did start out with something like the USA's racial mix – not at all what a future world might be like, but it was progress. It also gave a role to women that was good for the time. Lieutenant Uhura looks much more sexually available than women in later series, and she is also virtually Captain Kirk's Receptionist. Yet this small advance turned out to be a great inspiration.

I will also admit that I didn't really see it at the time. I had nothing against women and non-whites having commanding roles. If asked, I'd have said fine. But I don't recall making any sort of protest about it. Or backing those who occasionally did.

As a first-year student, I made a good impression on other students by saying that people are responsible for their *inactions*, as well as their positive actions. It was a good insight, but saying it is much easier than applying it consistently.

The battleground for equality is not just *Star Wars*. You'd find similar stuff in a host of mainstream series that are largely forgotten. *Star Trek* was a pioneer, but still had one foot in the past.

A rejected first pilot with a Captain Pike rather than Captain Kirk featured a bossy female 'Number One', who got a negative reaction.¹⁴ And in one episode in the dismal Third Season, a woman seeking to be Captain is treated as an aberration. When they finally had a real one with Captain Janeway, they were careful to emphasise her feminine side. Janeway had been planning to marry and we see her pain when she makes a necessary command decision to be exiled far from home.

They also kept changing Janeway's hair-style, which irritated Kate Mulgrew who played her.¹⁵ Mulgrew also didn't get along with Jeri Ryan who played Seven of Nine, and still plays her in the new *Star Trek: Picard*.¹⁶ But Mulgrew did wish for a homosexual or bisexual character to appear in *Voyager*, and would have played the role herself. It actually only happened with other actors and in *Deep Space Nine*. And mostly in the Mirror Universe, where everyone was supposed to be disapproved of.¹⁷

Captain Pike and 'Number One' were re-created in *Star Trek: Discovery* with new actors. (And I now follow the new convention of just saying 'Actors' and not segregating females as Actresses.) We are now promised a new series centred on them and the young Spock.¹⁸

Star Trek: Discovery was notable for having the top jobs initially held by two non-white females. And was bitterly hated by some fans. I liked it, but noted that when the East Asian lady was replaced by a version of her from the malignant Mirror Universe, this was a sly and ruthless character, a female Fu Manchu. Still, it is all progress.

Progress paralleled by real-life space ventures. I also notice how it nicely parallels the pattern of actual humans

14 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cage_\(Star_Trek:_The_Original_Series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cage_(Star_Trek:_The_Original_Series))

15 <http://www.trek.fm/feature-articles/2011/11/25/captain-janeway-and-the-ever-morphing-hairdo.html>

16 <https://screenrant.com/star-trek-captain-janeway-facts-trivia/>

17 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirror_Universe

18 <https://variety.com/2020/tv/news/star-trek-series-anson-mount-ethan-peck-rebecca-romijn-cbs-all-access-1234607259/>

in space. The early NASA line-up was solidly Nordic and male. No black faces, even though there were plenty of non-white pilots by then. It was the Soviet Union that sent up the first women. And also the first Jew, Boris Volynov¹⁹, though that was probably just a coincidence.²⁰ No more significant than both fatal Space Shuttle accident had a Jew among the crew. And that's too weird even for conspiracy theorists, I'd suppose.

It is also a sad fact that the Soviet union from the 1960s went off in an anti-progressive direction. Messed up their economy with a weird system of state-controlled market incentives, which just caused confusion. Did not send a second woman into space for nearly 20 years, and probably just because NASA was finally going to do this. Increasingly looked like the past rather than the future.

A multi-racial and near-sexually-equal society didn't just happen. It happened after decades of pressure, including stuff called Cultural Marxism by those indignant at being crushed by it. And it happened with governments mostly using the state machine to force such changes.

The sharp rise in overt racism with the election of Donald Trump is noted as a fact by left-liberals, but they mostly resist thinking about what it means. They are naturally keen to recapture the state machine, but mostly resist putting it so.

The hash that left-liberal forces made of the West's dominance in the 1990s paved the way for Trump, who is at least trying to get the USA free of wars that should never have been started. And 1990s errors were deeply tied to an unreasonable belief in the power of Spontaneous Politics.

In a complex society where people can think freely, they also need binding rules. Preferably binding rules chosen by the will of the majority, but that condition did not apply till the last few centuries. Was not even very popular. And people in China accept their system of one-party rule. See it as doing at least as good a job as the West in implementing the wishes of the majority.

We cannot return to tribalism. And if we look at what tribalism mostly was, we should not wish to.

Tribal customs certainly work, because most tribalists would feel emotional pain at the thought of breaking them. Might also fear bad luck, or a bad afterlife, or both. This gets confused with a voluntary and rational decision that looking after the 'common' is the right thing to do.

Prawns But Not Honeybees?

All of us are constrained by our culture. As a typical Anglo, I'd be disgusted by the thought of eating bees in honey. Yet some cultures count this and other insects a delicacy.²¹ And I am fond of honey with the insects out of sight and out of mind. I eat prawns, even though I am aware that they feed on what is politely known as 'detritus'.

Why do we get 'tragedies of the Commons'? Because in the real world, a '*voluntary and rational decision to look after the common interest*' is not the same as actually doing it.

It depends on what it costs you to stick to rules you agree

19 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris_Volynov

20 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Jewish_astronauts

21 <https://www.irishexaminer.com/farming/arid-20237140.html>

with.

Or what you can gain by doing something you'd see as wrong.

Most of us are guilty on occasions. Including me.

It would be nice if we could have a happy and peaceful world without *either* a state with harsh enforcement *or* a culture that enforces controls that are not automatically part of Human Nature.

It would also be nice if no one died before they had their full three score and ten years of generally healthy life.

I see the one as no more likely than the other.

And how could it be done?

If there were some simple mental conditioning that would cure paedophiles without particularly harming them, I'm sure there would be overwhelming support for using it. Almost as much for enforcing it on anyone who had offended. And some for screening the entire population and curing potential criminals.

What about 'curing' those who are transsexual or transgender? A lot more controversial.

Or homosexuality? Treating it as a condition needing cure would be beyond the pale nowadays. But in the past, Anglo society supported the use of Behavioural Therapy, and some homosexuals volunteered for it.

It turned out to be entirely useless: cures for drinking or gambling sometimes worked, but changing basic sexual orientation didn't. And meantime cultural values were shifting.

Supposed cures claimed by religious extremists are probably just cases of bisexuals who somehow discovered their homosexual side first, perhaps by being shy of the opposite sex. You do get 'latent heterosexuals': people who start off with their own sex but then unexpectedly find love and successful intercourse with someone of the opposite sex.

Looking more widely, it is an interesting thought that if it *were* possible to change homosexuals into heterosexuals, it would *also* be possible to change the entire population into bisexuals. Or even confirmed homosexuals, perhaps to reduce the population if climate change got really bad.

It probably will become technically possible, within the next 50 or 100 years. And another option might be to make everyone Polyamorous: free with either sex and without jealousy or exclusiveness.

Or abolish sexual desire altogether. Let both sexes mature with minimal sexual development, and use medical means to make babies. Have children raised in wider communities untroubled by the common disputes caused by sexual desire, or the lack of it.

I have no idea what the human race will do when this becomes possible. Quite possibly fragment into different groups doing it their own way. And if by then we have space colonies, which seems likely, people with different life-styles could safely live apart.

And I am rather glad that it won't be my problem.

Confident that you'd get violent disagreements if you started a debate on these issues among people who claimed to be firm believers in Spontaneous Politics.

There is a big difference between thinking enforcement would be a good idea, and doing something about it.

This applies to law-and-order issues, as well as to sex.

A few years back, I had an issue about my possible personal obligation for preventing crime. The late Christopher Tolkien was giving a private reading of a short unfinished piece called "*The New Shadow*", at a gathering called Oxonmoot.²² Its existence was long rumoured, but it had not previously been available even to members of the Tolkien Society, at that time very close to the family. This unfinished work would have been a sequel to *The Lord of the Rings*, but might have disappointed. You can freely read it now in a collection called *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, but then it was confidential. And I noticed someone covertly recording the reading of the unpublished work with a video camera hidden in a briefcase.

I saw and I disapproved and I did nothing. I did not want to disrupt a happy gathering. Nor to harm a person who probably would deserve it.

I could not see that anyone would be hurt much by this illegal recording.

I'd never be a good law enforcer. I sympathise. I think about moral issues, without being sure of the answer.

One thing I thought about was the much-debated Trolley Problem.²³ This is an argument about whether it would be proper to *intentionally kill* one person in order to save the lives of five others. It is not usually put like that, and I found a striking lack of reaction when I made a detailed argument about it in an amateur philosophy magazine. I called it *Critique of Pure Murder*, and I have recently posted it for anyone interested.²⁴

I'd never be a good law enforcer. But I am very glad that I live in a society where good law enforcers exist.

I assume that good law enforcers are not troubled by the complex thoughts I keep having. I am also below average at reading people: someone who'd not spot a policeman unless they were wearing a blue uniform. Nor a criminal, unless they were making a display, and some displays are just that. It is not something that fits me.

My own involvement is hardly needed.

And I don't call them necessarily bad for being tough on enforcement.

They also see the victims, a point I saw made in a book by an ex-policeman. Crime caper films mostly avoid showing victims, or else nothing very bad happens.

The Tolkien case I mentioned is one of just two where I actually might have had a role. The other was a car behaving oddly at the time of the IRA bombs in London: I take it personally when places I know get bombed. And it probably was a plain-clothes policeman ignoring traffic rules, but I felt obliged to report it to uniformed police officers, just in case.

Beyond that, nothing. If some of my Irish friends have done things the police would be interested in, no one has told me anything specific.

But why do we have such feelings?

22 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tolkien_Society#Events

23 <https://medium.com/@sarabizarro/the-trolley-problem-73e22048d88e>

24 <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Critique-of-Pure-Murder>

Two Brothers or Eight Cousins

J B S Haldane once said "I would lay down my life for two brothers or eight cousins". He was referring to the fact that our siblings on average share 50% of our genes. That our cousins would on average share 12.5%.²⁵

Or at least it's said he said it, though only in a pub conversation. And apparently the exact maths can be disputed.

But it is a neat summary of something known as Kin Selection.²⁶ The reason why biology has produced species where individuals help each other without clear return. Sometimes even die for each other.

And to get technical, the maths suggest that yourself and two brothers should be counted as being of equal value, assuming that you have no sense of your self-identity. Which appears true of insects and other simple animals. True for all plants, fungi, microbes, and bacteria, as far as we know.

Among humans, a man who calculated that he had a 97% of dying along with a 98% chance of saving 2 brothers or 8 cousins should do it. And there are people, mostly right-wing economists, who do solemnly perform such calculations for humans. Do so under the impression that this is some Deep Truth. And are useful fools for the Greedy Rich.

Haldane put it as sacrificing yourself for others. Less often mentioned is that the logic of Natural Selection *also* means a man should be ready to sacrifice three cousins for one brother. Or many strangers for just one cousin.

This is not unlike what real humans generally do when under pressure. And are particularly likely to do in societies where there is blood vengeance rather than an external and coercive system of law.

You can find a nice account in the Icelandic Sagas, historic novels written in early mediaeval times and based on real family histories. The Christian Church seems to have suppressed most such literature, when it was trying to eliminate actual blood-feuds. The survival of *Beowulf* may well be due to it being about monster-killing rather than feuds between humans. A similar bias was probably present in the two collections of stories in Welsh that are available in English as *The Mabinogion*, though these do include brutal feuds and also rape and some most peculiar sex.

There have not been many popularisations of the Icelandic Sagas, nor anything much good that I've come across. I'd rate *Hrolf Kraki's Saga* by SF writer Poul Anderson as the best for anyone who can't tackle the complex and confusing sagas themselves. But I feel a lot better could be done.

Feel also that our culture resists seeing the past patterns of irregular state-free violence as they actually were.

Kin Selection has shaped our nature. But humans can do better. We have done better, but have a long way to go.

Kin Selection also got twisted out of all recognition by Professor Dawkins in his famous book, *The Selfish Gene*.

Twisted to make it appear to favour selfish New Right

25 <https://theconversation.com/origins-of-altruism-why-hamilton-still-rules-50-years-on-27223>

26 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kin_selection

ideas rather than socialism.

If you imagine genes as selfish entities, then their motivation would include pushing us to acts that we class as unselfish.

Except that Professor Dawkins would not seriously argue that genes had motivation. No biologist would seriously believe this, though you do find them sometimes slipping into thinking like that. Such as asking why a particular type of Green Algae went to immense efforts to develop new organs and become our familiar land plants. Natural Selection says that there was no motivation and no foresight. The door was open, and one group of green algae mindlessly blundered through it.

We can be confident that it was just one, because all land plants retain an odd system of sex and reproduction:

“‘Alternation of generations’ in the life cycle is thus between a diploid generation of sporophytes and a haploid generation of gametophytes.”²⁷

We and most other animals are diploid, two sets of genes. Our eggs and sperm are haploid, but don’t have a life of their own. But a few animals and all land plants have them as independent organisms.

Mosses have the gametophyte dominant. For ferns it is the sporophytes, but there is a little dependant plant that is the gametophyte. For more familiar plants, the gametophyte is not visible, and was found only when botanists investigated in detail.

If you imagine humans reproducing in the manner of ferns, adults would produce tiny mouse-like creatures, both male and female. These would find each other, fuse and produce a new baby.

There might be alien intelligent species that do something like that, and it would make a good SF story.

And if you ask why plants use this bizarre system, it was a feature of the group of algae that blundered through the open door that led to land plants. And similar things exist elsewhere. A group called the cnidaria and which include jellyfish have a basic pattern of swimming medusae and sessile polyps.²⁸

There is also a strange creature called the ‘Portuguese man o’ war’. It is actually a collection of individual creatures acting as one. Three types of medusas and four types of polyps. If these had brains, the creature would have an identity crisis.

Selfish genes?

If your weather-forecaster spoke of angry thunderstorms, you’d not see this as very rational. And yet to think of thunderstorms as dangerous but useful makes sense. You need the rain. It is a good actual predictor of how you should view thunder. Whereas Dawkins merely misleads.

Selfishness is something that simply does not exist except for organisms that live socially. It is not the same as being *asocial*: the rare condition in which an individual genuinely does not see why they should care about others. A category invented by the Nazis, sadly, but it has now gained neutral status. But it arose when they were rounding up everyone they disapproved of, and trying to change those they counted as Nordic enough to be possibly redeemable for their New Germany. And

27 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternation_of_generations

28 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cnidaria>

found that some of them really did not care.

The Wiki says “Asociality refers to the lack of motivation to engage in social interaction, or a preference for solitary activities.” It distinguishes it from someone who is *anti-social*, seeking to do harm. The *Oxford English Dictionary* treats the two as overlapping, but I find the Wiki more reasonable on this.

Both are distinct from sociopathic types, who absolutely have to interact but also seek to selfishly dominate. Sociopaths are mostly OK for as long as they can dominate.

And none of this has anything to do with genes. The asocial individual usually understands what social duties are, but does not wish to be part of them. The selfish person also understands, but chooses which duties to respect and which to ignore, based in part on a desire not to pay the cost of being seen as selfish. But all of that implies a conscious mind. Science insists that genes merely give the *impression* of choice, based on Natural Selection.

Dawkins would not say otherwise. So in his later books, he tried arguing that when he said ‘selfish genes’ he meant something else.

But ‘selfish’ is an emotionally loaded word. And one that was calculated to boost the politics of the New Right.

Just imagine someone claiming that all Tories are cannibals, and then tried excusing it by saying that their policies consumed the lives of others. Admitted that there was no evidence that Tories were particularly likely to devour human flesh, but still felt that it was true ‘in a sense’.

It would be interesting if some Experimental Psychologist should try this as an exercise. Do it for one of two imaginary and otherwise neutral political parties in some imagined countries. Present the cannibal slur, freely say that it was biased, but then record opinions on the imagined parties. Compare it to another group given exactly the same details without the slur.

I am confident that a strong bias would be found. Also that those who had been biased would deny it – the slur was known to be false.

Or you could use a media trick. ‘*Several leading Tory politicians are reported to have been guilty of cannibalism, though this has also been denied*’.

Similar tricks are often floated in the real-life media. Float an unproven and perhaps unlikely story as ‘reported’, but only if it suits the ends of the rich individuals who own most of the media.

Another cultural bias: one of Dawkins’ books is called *A Devil’s Chaplain*, based on a remark made privately by Charles Darwin:

“What a book a devil’s chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low and horridly cruel works of nature!”²⁹

This feeds into the idea that predatory capitalism is somehow natural. An idea that also suited Darwin, whose family was rich from investments based on an oppressive factory system that they were comfortably distanced from.

And it’s the *wrong* analogy. Just as bad as Selfish Genes or Angry Thunderstorms.

If you wanted to put Natural Selection into human form,
29 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Devil%27s_Chaplain

you'd need to think of it as **The Japes of a Callous Jester**. Not intentionally cruel but also not avoiding cruelty and injustice. Producing horrors, jests and also great beauty and harmony

Nature rambles and the moon don't care. That's how I see it.

Also why we need a state machine that enforces the duty of care. Individual human virtue is excellent, but in itself it is never enough.

Please Be Spontaneously Obedient

I did it my way.

They did it their way.

No one could agree.

No one liked the outcome.

Everyone blamed somebody else.

This is what normally happens when freedom-loving people form a *spontaneous* movement on the shared slogan of *liberation*.

Current orthodoxy says it must all be spontaneous and leaderless.

Current orthodoxy is foolish.

Lynch mobs are often spontaneous and leaderless.

Graffiti are a mix of vanity, racism and crude sexual slurs. Admirable graffiti are very much the exception.

Human communities work by living with a consensus that can be enforced on important matters. Expecting the vast majority to do a single thing is a hope that fails most of the time.

Where it succeeds in its immediate aims, as with the various Colour Revolutions, you should suspect Hidden Hands behind everything that looks spontaneous and leaderless.

Safely predict that the Long Result will not be what the spontaneous protestors were spontaneously hoping for.

And sadly foresee that they may then bitterly blame people just slightly different from themselves, with civil war a possible outcome.

In Ukraine, the President elected with great enthusiasm in 2014 after the Second Orange Revolution was thrown out with disgust in the 2019 election.

Much the same as happened after the First Orange Revolution.

The Western media downplay the awkward fact that a clear majority in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine refused to be ruled from a Kiev government. That a majority living there dislike and fear people who make heroes of right-wing Ukrainian Nationalists. People who began and ended the war fighting for Hitler, even though they also fought him in the middling period.³⁰

Those who complain about a messy referendum in Crimea stop short of asking for a second and decisive vote. They must sensibly assume this would be lost. That it would undermine all of the fog and darkness spread by the Western media. Media with selective support for just those popular uprisings that look likely to produce a government more obedient to the Anglosphere.

30 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/46-globalisation/ukraine-kievs-five-day-war-machine/>

That is the reality of 'spontaneous action'.

Legality was ignored in the removal of the Ukrainian President who had been duly elected by voters disheartened by mediocre outcomes from the First Orange Revolution. It broke Ukraine's own constitution. They had a proper Impeachment Process, and it did not allow removal by a simple majority in the legislature.³¹ But this was whitewashed by the Western media.

It was also a foolish rule to copy. The rule that keeps Trump in office. And his election needed a bizarre 'Electoral College' that gave him victory despite Hillary Clinton getting nearly three million votes more than him. That had previously empowered Bush Junior, despite oddities in voting in Florida and the confirmed fact that Al Gore won the popular vote by more than half a million.³²

And liberal opinion in the USA is much less vocal about this than you'd expect. Had they constantly mocked Trump as '*elected in defiance of normal democracy*', pressure for change would have built up. But perhaps 'centrists' who'd count as right-wing in most Western societies see the present system as a lesser evil.

Both the USA and Britain have resisted any form of Proportional Representation. Almost every other country with multi-party democracy has it. But the lack of it makes the pro-establishment Centrists more powerful.

Radicals tend to overlook electoral reform. They hope that it will all be won by spontaneous action.

Embarrassingly, Trump's supporters are just as much a case of spontaneous action.

Trump is a traditional US White Racist, not a Fascist. But Fascism was a right-wing reaction to real failures.

When the Establishment has a toxic and failed answer, this does not mean that 'The People' will suddenly See It All and demand a better world.

Many will opt for the Far-Right, and make things worse.

Fascism did succeed with its peacetime economics. It was also socially regressive, and might have successfully rolled back the values of the European Enlightenment.

Rolled them back as happened in Iran after the Shah fell. Rolled them back in the chaos the West inflicted on Arab countries by overthrowing secular autocratic regimes. Rolled back by the unwelcome spontaneous will of the majority in democratic elections in Turkey and in the Republic of India.

Fascism might have worked. It killed itself in Germany and Italy by a false belief in war as ennobling. And the Nazi delusion that they might have still won World War One had there not been a rebellion on the Home Front. Germany in 1918 had managed a last grand offensive after making peace with Soviet Russia, but the delayed arrival of huge US forces turned the tide and they could not have lasted long.

But vast numbers of Germans believed otherwise. And spontaneously believed that it was down to Jews, with right-wing Jewish Capitalists and bitter left-wing rivals in the Socialists and Communists all secretly working together.

31 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/2015-07-magazine/2015-07-ukraine-illegally-removed-its-elected-president/>

32 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2000_United_States_presidential_election

Spontaneous means that people do things *their* way. Which need not be *your* way.

Yet the idea is seductive. It plays on things we would *like* to believe.

The Bank That Broke The Man

There was a popular song about ‘*The Man Who Broke The Bank at Monty Carlo*’.

No songs about ‘*The Bank Which Broke The Man*’, because that is all too familiar.

It is anyway a spoof. Monty Carlo uses an odd system that allowed it:

“The expression ‘breaking the bank’ is used when a gambler wins more money than the reserve held at that particular table in the casino. At the start of each day, every table was funded with a cash reserve of 100,000 francs – known as ‘the bank’. If this reserve was insufficient to pay the winnings, play at that table was suspended while extra funds were brought out from the casino’s vaults.

“In a ceremony devised by Francois Blanc, the original owner of the casino, a black cloth was laid over the table in question, and the successful player was said to have broken the bank. After an interval the table re-opened and play continued.”³³

I take it to be one of many tricks that help make losers feel like winners.

I’d like to criminalise gambling. Having it run by crooks is a much lesser evil than having it legal. Less harmful than making it easily accessible by people who’d show a sensible caution about mixing with criminals.

Likewise drugs, though maybe Marijuana Clubs for licensed use would be a solution. Oblige them to look after their members, which would limit the problems some users get.

And I’m all for free supply to existing addicts. Accept that not all will ever cure themselves, so avoid a lot of suffering and crime by letting them stay mired in chemical dependence. But stop it spreading.

Yes, it is a limit on freedom.

But so are all other possible social arrangements. It is unfair to single out the Soviet system.

The big error of Western socialism is to think that something ‘went wrong’ in the Soviet Union. And that the ‘errors’ began with Stalin.

What actually happened was that Lenin grabbed unlimited power in the spontaneous chaos produced by an unexpected Revolution that overthrew the Tsar.

People now sometimes admire the February Revolution, because it produced no positive results that anyone can complain about.

Incidentally, that spontaneous revolution was ‘February’ because it began on February 23rd by the Russian Orthodox calendar, which hung onto the imperfect reform of the Pagan Roman calendar made by Julius Caesar. It was 8th March by a system introduced by Ugo Boncompagni, Pope Gregory the 13th. A system that is now the global standard, and is in line with the apparent position of the sun in the skies of Earth.

Lenin’s October Revolution – actually November by the

33 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Men_who_broke_the_bank_at_Monte_Carlo

global standard calendar they soon adopted – had some justification in ignoring a Duma that had been elected in 1912. Elected by a system rigged to give most power to the rich. And votes to men only, of course, but that was the norm everywhere that had voting back in 1917. Britain in 1917 still had a system giving votes to just 60% of men in the British Isles, and probably a minority in Ireland.³⁴ None to women. No significant powers for the non-white inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent, or anywhere else where there was not a clear majority who would be classed by racists as part of the Superior White Race.³⁵

But Lenin ignored the normal socialist aim of producing a fully democratised version of Western parliamentarianism. No intention of allowing a system he could not dominate. When the Constituent Assembly gave a clear majority to the incoherent Social-Revolutionary Party, he had the Assembly dissolved after meeting for just 13 hours.

Defying the Will of the People? The vote was overwhelmingly for some sort of socialism. Liberals got about 5%, including most of the Jewish votes, despite the spectacular presence of many Jews in the Bolshevik leadership. But Lenin preferred to rule in the name of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, where Bolsheviks obedient to Lenin had a comfortable majority. A majority helped by an electoral oddity that had urban delegates elected by a smaller number of voters than the regions used for rural votes.

If there was a tragedy, it was the later uprising against this multi-party Soviet system, which might have made a fine and open system of government. Under pressure, Lenin increasingly criminalised all political opposition.

The importance of the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion gets exaggerated: most of the revolutionaries of 1917 were elsewhere and most accepted the need to suppress the revolt. The uprising was by their replacements. But it was part of a suppression of spontaneous action within the Russian Revolution.

A decision to become a sometimes-squalid success, rather than yet another heroic failure.

Trotsky went along with this at the time. Was continuously authoritarian, until it became clear that the Party would not accept him as its leader after Lenin’s death. He then adopted the language of spontaneous democracy, but without apologising for his actual behaviour when in power. A double-mindedness and dishonesty that has infected his political heirs.³⁶

Defeating Nazism

Stalin was Lenin’s genuine heir. Very good at achieving sometimes-squalid success.

Notably the defeat of Nazism. The USA had the wealth and industrial strength to do it without the Soviets, but not a willingness to sacrifice millions of their young men for

34 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/40-britain/665-2/>

35 See <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/post-liberalism/being-an-aboriginal-european/> for details of how false the notion is.

36 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/labour-affairs-before-2014/why-trotsky-politics-achieved-nothing-solid/>

a foreign cause.

The USA lost 419,400, 0.32% of their population, in a war that was clearly being won after the first few difficult months. Britain lost 450,900, 0.94%, not counting the Empire. Finland lost 2.62% after a series of changes of alignment that did save them as an independent state. Austria lost 5.56%. Germany (1937 borders) lost 8.23%.³⁷ And the Soviet Union lost 13.7%: 10 million military and another 16 million from Nazi massacres and abuse.³⁸

I don't think the USA would have accepted many more deaths in a foreign war, particularly if Nazi Germany had conquered as far as the Urals and gained vast new supplies of food and raw materials.

To justify my belief that the USA would not have suffered very much more than they actually did suffer, I made an estimate of what the USA lost in other wars, using data from the Wiki:³⁹

| | Census | Population | War Deaths | Per Million | Percent |
|------------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|---------|
| American War of Independence | 1780 | 2,780,400 | 82,000 | 29,492.2 | 2.9492 |
| War of 1812 | 1810 | 7,239,881 | 15,000 | 2,071.9 | 0.2072 |
| US Civil War | 1860 | 31,443,321 | 1,000,000 | 31,803.3 | 3.1803 |
| Indian Wars (1811–1924) | 1880 | 50,189,209 | 6,596 | 131.4 | 0.0131 |
| Spanish–American War | 1900 | 76,212,168 | 2,446 | 32.1 | 0.0032 |
| Philippine–American War | 1900 | 76,212,168 | 6,165 | 80.9 | 0.0081 |
| World War One | 1920 | 106,021,537 | 116,708 | 1,100.8 | 0.1101 |
| World War Two | 1940 | 132,164,569 | 419,400 | 3,173.3 | 0.3173 |
| Korean War | 1950 | 151,325,798 | 36,574 | 241.7 | 0.0242 |
| Vietnam War | 1970 | 203,211,926 | 58,318 | 287.0 | 0.0287 |
| First Gulf War | 1990 | 248,709,873 | 292 | 1.2 | 0.0001 |
| War in Afghanistan | 2000 | 281,421,906 | 2,419 | 8.6 | 0.0009 |
| Second Gulf War | 2000 | 281,421,906 | 238 | 0.8 | 0.0001 |
| Occupation of Iraq | 2010 | 308,745,538 | 4,491 | 14.5 | 0.0015 |

For wars before the 20th century, the Wiki had high and low estimates. I used the high, since it was worse for the case I was making. No doubt better estimates could be made, but the overall picture would be unlikely to change.

What's notable is how much more willing to suffer the inhabitants of North America were, when it was their own immediate future that was being decided. In the 1780s and 1860s, it was not a war you could go home from. It was the fate of that home that was the issue.

37 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties#Total_deaths_by_country

38 There are actually several different estimates – see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties_of_the_Soviet_Union. I used the one from the same Wiki page as the others, as at 30th August 2020.

39 Data mostly from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_the_United_States. Since population did not have to be exact, I used from the 10-year census data for the year nearest to or most relevant to the war. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographic_history_of_the_United_States. Also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_Iraq_War.

But their 'Civil War' could also be seen as a failed War of Independence for the South. There were some in the North who wanted to say '*Depart In Peace, Erring Sisters*'. Who thought there was a right of secession, even though most disliked slavery.

The North always had the option of ending the war with the core of the Confederacy left as an independent and slave-holding state.

According to 'History Wall Charts',⁴⁰ the Confederacy had a population in 1861 of just over nine million, but the free population was just 5,582,205. These suffered 94,000 killed in action, and another 164,000 died of sickness - a total of 254,000. 5.2% casualties. (And I'd suppose that 'sickness' includes those who died of the long-term effects of wounds.)

The Union after secession had 22 million, including a few slaves in slaves states that did not secede. A free population of 21,650,993. 110,070 killed in action and 250,152 died of sickness – a total of 360,222. That is a

40 <http://vanguardpublications.com/wall-charts/wall-chart-history-of-civil-war/readers-guide/statistics/>

mere 1.66%.

In the Union, there was all along a large body of opinion that wanted some sort of peace short of total victory. Many historians think that had Grant not captured Vicksburg, gaining complete possession of the Mississippi and cutting the Confederacy in two, Abraham Lincoln would have lost the 1864 election. That some sort of compromise would have been made.

US citizens tend to be brave in the face of immediate danger. And can stick with a war that is clearly being won. But in Korea, and much more clearly in Vietnam, they showed that they would not stick with a war that cost them lives and seemed to be going nowhere.

Had not the Soviet Union been driving the Nazi forces back and back on the Eastern Front before Allies forces landed in Western Europe, the war could easily have bogged down. That's even assuming that the Allies could have got a foothold without two-thirds of the German Army fighting on the Eastern Front through to the bitter end.

Without the Soviet Union doing most of the dying, it is hard to see how the USA could have defeated Nazi Germany without maybe 4 million casualties, just over 3% of the population as it then was. Nearly ten times their actual losses.

It is very unlikely they would have endured pain on that scale.

US Acts of Abandonment

It's a confirmed historic fact that the USA abandoned South Vietnam, and the right-wing Khmer Republic they had created. Resisted various earlier schemes for a compromise peace that would have been obviously less than a US success.

Until the bitter end, most US citizens could not accept the notion that they could actually lose a war. Even critics of the system often evade it. Thus in Joe Haldeman's 1974 military science fiction novel 'The Forever War', we are told that the Vietnam War 'faded away', which would have been a limited success like Korea, with the USA saving their half of a divided country. And in his 1994 Vietnam War novel '1968', he insists on seeing the Tet Offensive as a failure for Hanoi.

Japan and Nazi Germany were probably not wrong in thinking that the USA's capacity for suffering was less than theirs. They just underestimated it, and also underestimated US military efficiency once they got used to war.

Ho Chi Minh accurately assessed both.

The leaders of the USA also preferred to let their discarded allies suffer, rather than conciliate Vietnam and the restored Cambodia by offering them aid if US associates got decent treatment. They found various pretexts to sit back and let atrocities happen, which they could afterwards make good propaganda about. Something to sell to the voters, who are less callous and therefore are continuously deceived.

In World War Two, the right-wing Polish underground got out accurate reports of the Death Camps in Occupied Poland. Bombing the rail links to the Death Camps would certainly have hampered mass extermination. The leaders of both the USA and the British Empire decided it would be too much trouble.

Churchill as leader of the British Empire also decided to let millions of Bengalis starve in 1943. And did not expect this to lead to the actual collapse of loyalty by Indian subjects who had supposed that it was an Empire they were part of.

World War Two was largely a victorious war for the USA, unlike Britain and most of Europe. They did suffer a string of defeats by the Japanese, beginning with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. But the Battle of Midway in June 1942 reversed the balance. And the Guadalcanal campaign from August 1942 was the first of a series of almost unbroken US advances against what Japan then held.

Now imagine that the Soviet Union had collapsed or capitulated within a few months of the June 1941 invasion, as was widely expected. Germany now has the oil of the Caucasus. It also has plenty of other raw materials and food. It might allow a puppet Russian state

in Siberia, or perhaps more widely. Regardless, it now has land communication with Japan, which had long held Manchuria. German troops could be sent across Asia to help Japan conquer China, where the Kuomintang might anyway be more inclined to surrender. And that is assuming that Britain still has the will to fight on and keep Germany's large fleet out of the Atlantic.

Or if the war in the Soviet Union just stagnates, as did Japan's invasion of China, it would still have needed a much deeper commitment from the USA than any previous war to have actually defeated Hitler. No country has an unlimited willingness to suffer, and nor did any ever 'fight to the last man'. Apart from the wars on its own soil to determine their own future, the USA did not otherwise lose more than one in two hundred. (0.5% or 5000 per million.)

The Wiki shows 290,000 Confederate military dead, of whom 26,000–31,000 died in Union prisons. On the Union side, with four times the population, 25,000–30,000 of these died in Confederate prisons, according to the Wiki. Both sides ran their prisoner-of-war camps badly.

Another odd detail – their Civil War initially had captured troops exchanged one for one, for soldiers of the same rank. This broke down because the Confederates refused to return Afro-Americans fighting for the Union.

"Lacking means for dealing with large numbers of captured troops early in the American Civil War, the Union and Confederate governments both relied on the traditional European system of parole and exchange of prisoners. A prisoner who was on parole promised not to fight again until his name was "exchanged" for a similar man on the other side. Then both of them could rejoin their units. While awaiting exchange, prisoners were briefly confined to permanent camps. The exchange system broke down in mid-1863 when the Confederacy refused to treat captured black prisoners as equal to white prisoners. The prison populations on both sides then soared."⁴¹

Given their smaller numbers, this was one of numerous blunders they made on wider matters. Only in purely military matters were they superior, in part because mostly Southern officers had been favoured before the Civil War, probably because the mostly-Southern leadership knew it might come to Civil War.

I'd see it as part of the same errors shown with Trump and Covid-19. Cause and effect are illusions. We do the right thing, and God will give us immediate material rewards.

This makes perfect sense, if you believe in the sort of Interventionist God that religions traditionally claimed to represent. Which is why I am an atheist. Why I see the mass of lukewarm believers as people on the road to atheism, and getting there slowly.

If some Higher Being chose to create the known universe more than 13,000,000,000 years ago, Thatself evidently left it to run itself ever since.

Or if there was some Will of God that prevented the worse sort of errors, as some like to believe, then Stalin's role would have to be accepted as part of that Will.

⁴¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War_prison_camps#Parole

A War For Democracy?

World War Two was a victory for democracy.

A victory that would not have happened without the Soviet Union.

Current Western histories of World War Two play down the Soviet Role. And play up the role of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in starting it.

Almost everyone agrees that Hitler was determined to start a war, one way or another.

Historians also mostly agree that he wanted Poland as an ally in conquering the Soviets, if they would just be reasonable and give him the overwhelmingly-Germany city of Danzig. This mostly gets left out of popular accounts, but after extensive reading I have not found anyone who would actually deny it.

It was one of many things that might have happened, or at least seemed possible.

A more modest man than Hitler would have realised that it was hopeless to expect Poles to accept your notion of 'reasonable' if their own sense of Polishness said otherwise.

He could have delayed the issue, and hoped to solve it later as part of a wider deal that gave Poland land in the Ukraine that had been Polish in the 18th century.

Instead he offered Stalin an unexpected lifeline, at a time when he must have been worried by the prospect of all the enemies of the Soviet Union combining against it.

Hitler was an arrogant fool, but also came close to succeeding. The West turned out to be much weaker than it seemed on paper. Poland collapsed with astonishing speed, thanks to new methods of tank warfare invented by Britons but rejected by most senior commanders.

He was anyway likely to start some sort of war in the next few years. Had Stalin not accepted Hitler's unexpected decision to first risk a war with the West, the likely outcome would have been a war much less favourable to the Soviet cause.

Much less favourable to the gigantic shift to the left that occurred after the war. The winding-up of colonial empires and several decades of improved social welfare and economic security. An improvement now almost written out of history by the New Right, and also by Trotskyists and others who like to downplay success by rivals on the left.

Actual democracy was not well advanced in Europe before World War Two. The rituals of multi-party electoral politics were carried through in a number of countries, but mostly failed to meet the actual wishes of those living there. And most of them ruled huge non-white populations, denied democracy and generally classed as Racial Inferiors.

Even within Europe, there were vast inequalities of class, mostly inherited. And a widespread view among ordinary people that they were Lower Classes and ought to trust the Ruling Class to rule. This was weaker in the USA, but still very strong by modern standards. US voters in the 1950s would not have considered electing anyone other than a White Male, and mostly confirming to the norms of what was seen as the superior Nordic Branch of the Superior White Race.

This was weakening but still significant in the 1960s, with the Catholic faith of John F. Kennedy a real issue. And is visible in imagined worlds presented in early versions of science fiction like *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, as I detailed earlier.

Would this have happened without the Soviet Union being first an admired ally, and then a feared rival? While there were people who genuinely wanted to be nice to women and non-whites and to free Asian peasants in non-Communist Asia from the burdens of landlordism, I am sure there were many more who acted out of fear of losing the Cold War.

Let's suppose that Hitler's surprise push through the Ardennes had been anticipated and ended with a German defeat, rather than the Fall of France. Most likely Hitler would have been overthrown and replaced by a right-wing military government, the people who tried overthrowing him near the end of the war. German Jews would have survived, and perhaps got back some civil rights. Poland might have been restored as a smaller nation and without the Polish Corridor. But it would not have been a victory for democracy. Most of Europe east of Berlin had some sort of right-wing dictatorship, including Poland, which was also hostile to Jews who would not covert.

Democracy advanced after 1945, only because the war went otherwise.

The actual war saw the bulk of the fighting done by the Soviet Union. And much of the rest by the USA, which was at the time a left-wing influence on the British Empire. It was only after Britain and much of the rest of Western Europe had moved a long way left that the USA became a defender of surviving right-wing values.

Western Europe moved left because the Soviet Union was there as a grand alternative. Popular among intellectuals in Britain. Popular and with gigantic pro-Moscow Communist parties in many countries, notably Italy and France.

The French Communist Party peaked at 28.6% in 1946. It could still get a fifth of the votes as late as 1978.⁴²

The Italian Communist Party peaked at 31% in 1948, and got just over a quarter of the vote in 1987. Dissolved itself and then its successor parties declined after the Soviet collapse.⁴³

Those looking back at the 'golden years' or relative stability and social justice in the 1950s and 1960s mostly don't credit it to sheer fear by the capitalists of a global alternative that Moscow-Centred Leninism offered. Yet the raw facts suggest just that.

But the world changed. The Soviet Union lost its way and its friends fell away. And in line with the revival of Ideological Capitalism and Anti-Socialism, people were subtly persuaded that it had mostly been the USA that won the war.

Could Hitler have been defeated if the Soviet Union had not been toughened and industrialised by Stalin? The USA had the flesh and the metal to do it, certainly. But the 'flesh' had views of its own: a majority in the USA might have grown weary had the war dragged on.

Nor was it a matter of socialism somehow winning despite

42 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Communist_Party#

43 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Communist_Party#Election_results

Stalin's errors. Socialists are mostly not good at warfare, and few can point to any success at waging it. Apart from the Lenin-Stalin tradition, the only successes I can think of are movements like the IRA, where nationalism is the main motivator.

In 1945, the USA was much more distant from Soviet values than they were by 1989.

Part of the reason for the Soviet collapse was that it was not clear why they were maintaining the authoritarian party system that Lenin had invented as a way of overthrowing Tsarist Russia. And that he decided to make a global model after the immense destruction of World War One.

You could think of Leninism as a militarised version of socialism. Justified for the world it had to operate in originally. But whereas Chinese Leninism relaxed when it was safe to do so, Moscow prevented a similar relaxation when it was possible in the 1960s and 1970s. Lost much of its credibility by invading Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Had Moscow shifted to a more relaxed authoritarian system, as China did, the Soviet Union might still be fast-growing and flourishing.

The Man Who Broke the Banks

Without the Soviet Union, and without the ruthless industrialisation and tricky politics that Stalin opted for, a Nazi victory would have been almost certain. Or at best, a compromise peace that left Nazi Germany intact and dominating Continental Europe.

The European Parliament recently declared the Soviets guilty of World War Two, for having made a brief non-aggression pact with the Nazis. A pact which happened after years of the West letting Nazi Germany grow strong. Hitler was weak when he re-militarised the Rhineland, and would have backed down if challenged.

And the Soviets suspected this was all to make a Nazi Germany strong enough to destroy the Soviet Union. So Stalin countered to shape another sort of war.

He *was* **the man who broke the banks**, in as far as this has ever been achieved in the real world. The banks and bankers later came back, but that was after his heirs made the weird decision to bad-mouth the man who had created their state. Or to leave the status of Stalin as a matter on which thought was forbidden, after Brezhnev and his colleagues overthrew Khrushchev.

Gave credibility to a fading Trotskyist movement. One that then absorbed many of the best minds of 1960s radicalism, but failed to do anything useful with them. Remained marginal, whereas organisations like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth grew to vast influence.

Would-be revolutionaries who fail have made a habit of blaming those who dare to succeed. Put enormous efforts into arguing that every successful left-winger was actually a brutal bungler who made things worse.

And then are surprised when they themselves fail.

They let the 1930s Western Establishment look much better than it should, by not recognising what Stalin and mainstream Communism were actually up against.

In *Problems 42 – Britain's Pro-Fascist Past*, I show in

detail how the Tories tried to use Hitler against Stalin. How they then hoped to keep Fascist Italy neutral or even fighting with them once they were finally fighting Hitler.⁴⁴ Only when these options failed did it become an anti-Fascist war.

I've yet to see anyone outside of Neo-Nazi circles dare to argue that Hitler would have kept the peace indefinitely, had Stalin not made that non-aggression pact. For certain, it shaped the war in a way that gave the Soviet cause the best hope of survival.

And in fact shifted world politics a long way to the left.

On many issues, the USA in World War Two occupied the middle ground between the British Empire and the Soviet Union. They demanded a new world: a world somewhat like the world we got. A world very unlike the world of the 1930s.

And then in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s?

For as long as the Soviet Union was a strong challenger, left-wing spontaneous action was allowed many victories in the West.

Many people mistook this for something inevitable.

The Last Days of US Hegemony

The Anglo core of Western civilisation drew all of the wrong lessons from the weakening of the Soviet Union in the 1970s.

And from the opening-up of People's China in the same era.

The Soviet collapse was actually a triumph for the Mixed Economy and Welfare State. It *should* have been credited to the semi-socialist measures that the West had adopted in the 1940s.

Adopted because Classical Capitalism had failed. Had proved inferior to both Fascism and Leninism, until it absorbed many of their ideas about welfare and economic controls.

The West managed to do this without any unusual amount of repression, because it was mostly done during war or under the threat of war.

People cite Orwell a lot, and seem never to read his wider writings. Or read him with their brains switched off, as Christopher Hitchens did.⁴⁵

On issues like racial equality and equality for women, Orwell had a much more old-fashioned attitude than his enemies in the British Communist Party.

Orwell was often on the wrong side in the fight to create the modern world. But he *did* recognise that the old order had failed. He insisted it would have to take in a lot of socialism to survive.

In his well-known wartime essay *The Lion and the Unicorn*, he says:

"What this war has demonstrated is that private capitalism – that is, an economic system in which land, factories, mines and transport are owned privately and operated solely for profit – *does not work*. It cannot deliver the goods. This fact had

⁴⁴ See <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/>. An on-line version will be available from April 2021.

⁴⁵ See *Privatising Orwell*, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/45-1-more-on-fascism-the-world-wars/491-2/>

been known to millions of people for years past, but nothing ever came of it... The lords of property simply sat on their bottoms and proclaimed that all was for the best. Hitler's conquest of Europe, however, was a *physical* debunking of capitalism. War for all its evil, is at any rate an unanswerable test of strength."⁴⁶

He wrote that in February 1941, well before the invasion of the Soviet Union. Initial Nazi success in that invasion was down to them having had several years experience of war of a wholly new sort. But once the Soviet army had adjusted, the Soviet system proved much stronger.

Orwell preferred to see it otherwise. Later in 1941, he said clearly that he saw it as a confirmed new world despite a government still dominated by Tories:

"If there is one thing in the world that is certain, it is that capitalistic democracy in its present form cannot survive..."

"When I am writing for a predominantly socialist public, I hardly need to point out the structural weaknesses of capitalist democracy that will force it to change or perish. I prefer to insist on certain weaknesses which are inflicted on us by the hedonistic principle, and by the fact that in a democracy people are called on to vote upon things which in practice they know nothing about."⁴⁷

I've always insisted that what came back after World War Two was *not* capitalism but the Mixed Economy. It did allow malignant capitalist elements to flourish, but within limits.

There was also no inherent reason why it should have moved on from the White Racism and Male Dominance of the 1950s. Little pressure to do so, if it had not faced the massive global challenge of the Soviet Union.

You might well say, wasn't the Soviet Union *also* guilty of White Racism and Male Dominance? And I'd agree, yes, very imperfect compared to what existed later. But would the later superior forms have existed, without a Soviet threat and the threat of Communism becoming more popular?

The Soviets were still on what we now see as 'the correct side of history', until the 1970s.

It was only after the West closed the gap and the Soviet Union suppressed its own radicals that it began to decline. But sympathy for the Soviet Union for the decades when it was the main supporter of progressive values was correct.

A certain type of left-winger will say 'never mind who is less guilty: I will denounce it *all*', and feel wonderfully virtuous.'

A certain type of left-winger keeps being surprised that they lose. That public opinion often moves in the wrong direction, mistrusting the socialism that they denounced in versions other than their own. They lose, and never look to the correct answer.

In the same spirit, in the 1970s most socialists vehemently denounced the Mixed Economy as Capitalism. They

46 *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius*. Page 409 of Volume XII of Orwell's *Collected Works*. The second paragraph of Part II of the essay, for those with other editions. Emphasis original.

47 *Culture and Democracy*. Page 69 of Volume XIII of Orwell's *Collected Works*.

blocked all left-wing attempts to improve and restart it with Incomes Policy and Workers Control.

They were utterly astonished when Thatcher then won elections by saying that Capitalism was a good thing after all.

The Cause of the New Right

In the 1970s, the Mixed Economy had run into problems. But it was still working much better than Classical Capitalism ever had. Yet the people with both the will and the power to change things were the New Right, who had an ideological fervour against socialism. They were determined to prove that actual Western success in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s was a series of near-catastrophes from which only the marginalised survivals of True Capitalism had saved us.

Classical philosophy is a wonderful storehouse of methods to hide unpleasant truths. To justify rubbish. And the New Right certainly made use of it.

Plato and Aristotle were philosophers of the Classical Greek decline. The change from free City-States dominated by small property-owners into vast kingdoms dominated by the very rich. And it seems to me that they were cheer-leaders for this, under a cover of Higher Morals. Aristotle trained Alexander the Great and most of his generals, after all.

I have never felt they were good sources of workable wisdom. But they remain popular with the right, and some on the left as well.

Plato helped wreck the hopeful development of the Greek city-state of Syracuse, which might have produced a better version of the wider political order that was later created first by Macedonia and then Rome. He also managed to convince himself that disasters created by pupils of his were somehow not his fault. That it was down to reality being unfit to be the vehicle of his Superior Wisdom.

Socrates wrote nothing. The account of his beliefs we get from Xenophon and others differs markedly from Plato. But the same evasion of Off-Message Facts is always there.⁴⁸

From the 1960s, there have been many Off-Message Facts that Western thinkers mostly prefer to dodge.

To seek to roll back history and abolish a successful Mixed Economy system was foolish. But abuse of language was widespread, including on the left.

Lapsed leftists who migrated to the Centre-Right brought with them tremendous confusion of thinking.

They did vastly more damage to the Anglo Hegemony when trying to serve it, than they ever had as leftists seeking to reform or overthrow it.

Years back, I tried to summarise the incoherent thinking behind the slick propaganda:

"The New Right view of 20th century history might run as follows:

"Capitalism, expanding from its original base in Britain, was liberating humanity up until 1914, when it suffered from an inexplicable outbreak of Trench Warfare.

"It bounced back, but then a fairly normal economic

48 See *Socrates and the Abuse of Reason*. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/whats-wrong-with-socrates/>

slump at the end of the 1920s caused unjustified panic and capitalism was in the 1930s replaced by capitalism.

“After World War Two, in excessive admiration for the Soviet Union after it had merely saved the West from Nazism, there were still more drastic change and capitalism was replaced by capitalism.

“But in the 1980s, Thatcher and Reagan rescued us by replacing capitalism with capitalism. Of course there is still much more that needs to be done to replace capitalism with capitalism in the West.

“China, while owing all of its successes to capitalism, faces all sorts of disasters unless it urgently replaces capitalism with capitalism.

“They don’t put it like that, obviously. But the label ‘capitalist’ is stuck onto almost all of the various political-economic systems that the West has had in the 20th century. It is also applied to the post-Mao system in China, which has actually been changing continuously and has always been massively dominated by central, regional and local government.”⁴⁹

If you start using different names – even calling it ‘Capitalism A’, ‘Capitalism B’ etc., it becomes obvious that it was the versions further from the abstractions of Adam Smith that delivered the best results during the 20th century.

We in the Ernest Bevin Society moved in the 1970s from hard-line Leninism to support for further radical reform within a system that we saw clearly as a useful Mixed Economy.

For us, Incomes Policy and Workers Control were the next steps forward. We felt that the bulk of the left was being suicidal in opposing these.⁵⁰

We didn’t exactly foresee Thatcherism. But when it appeared, we were not hugely surprised. Were in touch with some of her ideologists, who hoped to win us over. One or two individuals defected, but most of us stuck to the original vision.

Nor did we mistake Thatcherism for Real Capitalism. That was the disastrous error of Tony Blair and New Labour, which we also warned against.⁵¹

It isn’t in fact true that **knowledge is power**.

Knowledge without power is mostly a set of lost opportunities.

If it is specific hidden knowledge about dangerous people, it can also be fatal. Or lead to a blighted career, if the targets prefer to avoid violence.

More often being ahead of your time counts for little, except that in the future you might be noted as someone who got there ahead of most people. And even that

49 *Just What Do We Mean by Capitalism?*, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/48-economics/replacing-capitalism-by-capitalism-the-new-rights-muddled-ideas/>

50 See *Workers Control – the Lost Chance of the 1970s*, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/problems-magazine-older-issues/>.

51 See *Common Ownership & Popular Administration*, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-037-to-048/magazine-045-not-yet-scanned/clause-4-and-common-ownership/>. Also *The Origins of Clause Four*, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-037-to-048/magazine-045-not-yet-scanned/labours-original-clause-4-public-ownership/>.

assumes your ideas win out in the long run.

But Power linked to Lack of Knowledge is mostly ruinous.

False Knowledge is even worse. Someone who admits not knowing will seek expert advice. But False Knowledge lets you denounce those who knew what to do at critical moments.

There has been a lot of this with the global Covid-19 crisis. The World Health Organisation gave good advice from early on. Trump ignored them, and then denounced them for not advising him when his blunders became clear. And he could yet get re-elected despite this.

And Trump is just an extreme of what began in the 1980s.

The Thatcher / Reagan line has proved disastrous. The promise of Low Tax and Small Government has not been delivered. All they’ve done is boost the share taken by the rich, in economies that grew rather more slowly overall after their ‘reforms’.

Whatever they intended, *Feed-the-Rich* has been the reality.⁵²

But the abrupt Soviet collapse seemed to vindicate them. Saved them, when the massive economic crisis of 1987 might have led to a quiet move away from New Right dogma.

The 1987 crisis has almost vanished from memory, even though it was cured by massive state spending and a return to the logic of the Mixed Economy. As indeed was the 2008 crisis.

And the Soviet collapse was the failure of the successors of Stalin, not a failure of socialism for all times and all places.

The Soviet Union failed, because Khrushchev and Brezhnev let the planned core of a Wellsian World State decay into a thinly-disguised Russian hegemony .

And because they stagnated on social equality. The West overtook them on sexual equality and equality for non-whites. And decriminalised homosexuality, which they never did.

They had inherited a very strong economy from Stalin. But made the strange decision to replace a coherent economic overall plan with a series of pseudo-markets that were intended to work better.

These actually worked much worse.⁵³

There was visible disintegration in the 1970s. But since total socialist planning had worked in previous decades, there was no obvious reason why it should have been abandoned.⁵⁴

Mao’s China with its ultra-collectivised economy also matched the world average, despite hostility from both Superpowers. Western books *insinuate* otherwise, but never dare give a figure for overall growth. The generally-

52 *The Mixed Economy Won the Cold War*, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/the-mixed-economy-won-the-cold-war/>

53 See <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/the-soviet-past/market-socialism-in-the-soviet-union/> and <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/the-soviet-past/market-socialism-in-the-soviet-union/>. The latter is also available as a PDF, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/stalinseconproblparttwo.pdf>.

54 *Was the Soviet Union an Economic Failure?*, <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Was-the-Soviet-Union-an-Economic-Failure>.

agreed figures show that growth was healthy despite the errors following the Great Leap Forward.⁵⁵ Indeed, those errors happened because of over-confidence after success that had previously seemed impossible for mere Chinese.⁵⁶

The West's Cold War triumph was down to avoidable errors by Khrushchev and Brezhnev – not least the 1956 invasion of Hungary and 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.

People's China, which did not make such blunders, is now on course to replace the US as the strongest single power.

And apparently wise enough to realise that a Chinese hegemony is not a serious option. Its culture is unfamiliar to most of the rest of the world. Its spoken language confusing and its written language incomprehensible, without a long and difficult process of learning.

Meantime we face a virtual certainty that the US Hegemony will not survive the current Covid-19 crisis.

But what replaces it might well be worse. That issue still hangs in the balance.

Covid-19 – Liberation from Awkward Truths?

Like a stopped clock that manages to be right twice a day, Donald Trump was largely correct in seeing the USA's military bid for Global Hegemony as a burdensome failure.

And has a point that Globalisation has hollowed out the real US economy. Damaged a working class that in the USA fancied itself as part of the Middle Class.

But that's no more than Common Sense of the sort normal among business people. And there is plenty of evidence that Trump is a good self-publicist but a mediocre businessman. A lot of his ventures have failed, and produced losses for those who trusted him. His repeated refusal to disclose his real wealth suggests he owes his position to a vast fortune inherited from his bigoted but brilliant father.

Trump's persistent resistance to showing his tax returns make sense if they would reveal he has overall diminished his inheritance.

His refusal to recognise the perils of Climate Change is losing the USA credibility all over the world.

And under his leadership, the USA has made a worse hash of the Covid-19 pandemic than almost any other government.

As I said earlier, Power linked to Lack of Knowledge or False Knowledge is mostly ruinous.

When the Covid-19 crisis began, the current Overclass thought they could retreat into their Safe Havens and let the rest of us quietly suffer.

Almost right. In a crisis, the short term reaction is to rally round existing leaders.

If you mapped Covid-19 cases and Covid-19 deaths against strength of belief in New Right values, you'd find a very close match.

It would be nice to call it a right-wing failure and a left-wing success. But it would also be a simplification. Japan and Taiwan, though right-wing, are dominated

55 [Mao's Economic Success.](#)

56 [China 1949: Fixing a Broken Society.](#)

by traditional right-wing thinking that accepts social responsibilities. That respects expert and scientific opinion, except occasionally on things that contradict religious beliefs in Japan. And the same right-wing Australian government that denied Climate Change and did badly in the recent wave of fires showed a welcome conversion to wisdom when it came to the pandemic. Of course they are right next to Indonesia, which has just the same dangerous mix of live and dead animals in 'Wet Markets' as China had. Most of South-East Asia is as bad.

There are also complexities with figures. Back in May, the excellent Worldometer data showed the Vatican City as 3rd worst Cases Per Million, but with zero deaths.⁵⁷ This is actually just 12 individuals out of 801 who count as citizens of that micro-state.

But as at 31st September, the USA stands 10th in number of cases per million, and 11th by numbers of deaths.

Sweden, which rejected lockdown, stands 9th by deaths per million on the Worldometer, and 6th on a site called Information is Beautiful⁵⁸.

Brazil and India stand second and third in total number of cases. The USA is first, though it also has the third largest total population.

Allowing for all the complexities, it is very much a New Right pandemic.

Restraining the Adventurous Rich

H G Wells in his *Short History of The World* describes how the original Roman 'Republic of Farmers' was replaced after the First Punic War by a 'Republic of the Adventurous Rich Men'.

And this in turn by the 'Republic of the Military Commanders', which led on very naturally to the rule of Emperors. Which began as the *Princeps* system, created by Octavian Augustus from his initial advantage as chosen heir of Julius Caesar, greatest of the Military Commanders.

Despite lacking much that archaeology and foreign translations has since taught us, I rate Wells's *Short History of The World* very highly. Not good on world history beyond Europe and its colonies, but much the best quick summary of where the Western World came from. It could be usefully consulted by those who make comparisons between the end of the Roman Republic and various leaders they see as destroying democracy.

It helps to understand that Rome was never a real democracy. Its electoral system always gave a gigantic advantage to the rich. Much more weight than the poor in a complex voting system. And vast power for the Senate, where the rich dominated and it was a job for life. And where some senators were in debt to the richer ones, who resisted the reforms that Julius Caesar and Augustus had to force through by sheer intimidation and authoritarianism.

Wells says – and I agree – that it was the *Adventurous Rich Men* who did the real damage. They undermined the independent farmers who had been the basis for Rome's original greatness. Allowed the creation of a city-dwelling population that was happy to look to military commanders to protect them from the rich.

57 <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>

58 <https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/covid-19-coronavirus-infographic-datapack/> as at 28th May.

He also says that Julius Caesar has been hyped: he was just the culmination of the era of Military Commanders and the start of the transition to Early Empire.

Independent military commanders are not an option for developed countries in the modern world. They are an option in newly independent ex-colonial countries, where the military are often the most coherently modern thing. But Wells notes that the lack of Electoral Representatives to transmit the popular will in Rome was fatal to popular power. And Representative Democracy is absolutely and unavoidably part of the Western system.

But in the modern West, the Adventurous Rich – not all of them men – have been doing vast damage from the 1980s. Undermined the moderate prosperity that a majority had from the 1950s to 1970s.

It turns out that the Adventurous Rich do more good for the society when there is an authoritative state sitting on them and keeping control.

That ‘capitalism’ does best when it is not really capitalism. Or not capitalism by the New Right definition when it comes to economic ‘reforms’.

Their views do not match reality.

Even if you ignore ecology and welfare and look just at growth in material wealth, the pre-1980s version of the Mixed Economy did better.

What we have had since then remains Mixed Economy, despite repeated promises to change and despite Privatisation. Privatization has always needed state regulations, so it remains a Mixed Economy. But it has been a Feed-the-Rich version.

Most of us have our freedom limited by lack of money.

By the need to do work that is not our first choice. The need to earn money under conditions that are not of our choosing.

Or being unable to get a job at all.

Before the 1980s, ordinary people in the West had to be pretty hopeless not to get a job. Or to be living in an unemployment black spot, and they could always move.

Letting the Adventurous Rich have an unfair share of freedom took away a lot of real and functional freedom from the rest of us.

The Next Nine and the Damaged Majority

Economic thinking mostly avoids making a clear distinction between ‘making money’ and ‘taking money’.

A useful new industry often flourishes by their innovation taking money from others.

A supermarket takes from small shops

And now on-line shopping is destroying some of the larger stores.

It is not just what they call ‘Rent Seeking’. Which in their definition is just the rich in countries they don’t like. It seems not to include actual unproductive rents of the sort collected by characters like the Duke of Westminster. Indeed, thanks to loopholes favoured by the New Right, he was also able to legally evade most death duties on the enormous wealth of his family.

I’ve called it **Feed the Rich**, because that’s what it is. The supposed principles of Libertarianism are mostly

disregarded by the actual rulers when they don’t suit the rich.

As I mentioned earlier, I’ve done a long study: *Feed-the-Rich Economics*.

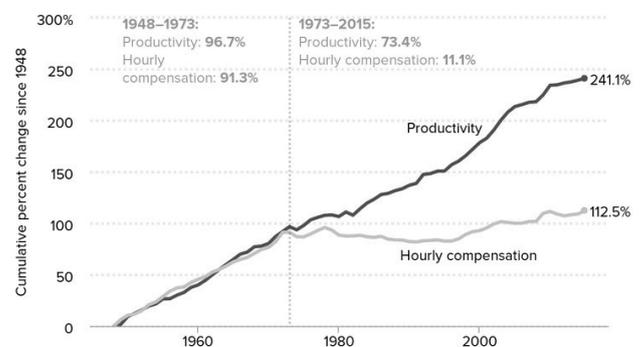
As well as detailing the damage to the actual growth in material wealth, I also emphasised that the pre-Thatcher system did give excellent rewards to actual talent and hard work.

I did not go along with the crude 1% versus 99%. Such arguments enthuse the Far Left, but annoy the Centre-Left and fail to win over the Bewildered Centre.

I’m a very visual person. For me, a graph can tell more than 10,000 words – which is also the amount of computer storage they typically use. And I noticed that the ‘Next Nine’, the people in the top 10% but outside the 1%, were not actually losing.

The gap between productivity and a typical worker’s compensation has increased dramatically since 1973

Productivity growth and hourly compensation growth, 1948–2015



Note: Data are for average hourly compensation of production/nonsupervisory workers in the private sector and net productivity of the total economy. “Net productivity” is the growth of output of goods and services minus depreciation per hour worked.

Source: EPI analysis of data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (see the technical appendix of Bivens and Mishel 2015 for more detailed information)

Economic Policy Institute

I noticed that in the USA and Britain, they had broadly kept their share of national income. Or maybe those nearest the 1% have gone up a little and those furthest have gone down a little. But it was the remaining 90% who had lost significant income and wealth. Lost it to the 1% in what was a simple us-or-them, what they call a Zero Sum Game.

Or something worse than Zero Sum. The decades from the 1980s have been an Economic Miracle for the 1%, and especially the richest 0.1% and 0.01% and 0.001%. But the claim that there would be ‘Trickle-Down’ if more freedom was given to the Adventurous Rich has proved untrue.

In Britain and the USA, the success of the 1950s and 1960s has never been recovered. And the decades 1980 to 2020 are not clearly superior even to the despised 1970s.

For the rest of the West, including Japan, there has been a sharp deterioration. ‘Reforms’ slowed economies that had been doing nicely before New Right ideas were imposed.

But as far as I know, those countries have also seen an Economic Miracle for the 1%, and especially the richest 0.1% and 0.01% and 0.001%. And they use their power to persuade voters that socialism failed.

The gains of the 1% are ridiculous. Bill Gates was bright enough to score 1590 out of 1600 on the USA’s Scholastic

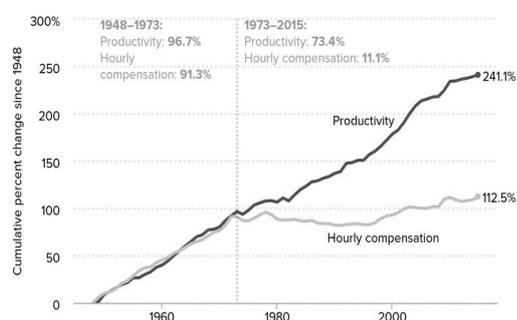
Aptitude Tests, and qualified to study mathematics at Harvard. But it would be interesting to check out the fates of others who were his classmates at the time.

For all measurable qualities other than income or wealth, the 1%, 0.1%, 0.01%, and 0.001% are *not* superior to the Next Nine.

Nor indeed to many in the 90%, which is a mix of all levels of ability. Highly talented and useful people are found there. But saying that is easier than proving it, even though we can point to past cases of people who died in poverty and are now famous. For those determined to love the super-rich, I cannot prove that this is still the case, though I would expect future decades to find exactly that. But seeking to win over those uncertain on the matter, I concentrate on the case of the Next Nine. A case which I see as glaringly obvious.

The gap between productivity and a typical worker's compensation has increased dramatically since 1973

Productivity growth and hourly compensation growth, 1948–2015



Note: Data are for average hourly compensation of production/nonsupervisory workers in the private sector and net productivity of the total economy. "Net productivity" is the growth of output of goods and services minus depreciation per hour worked.

Source: EPI analysis of data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (see the technical appendix of Bivens and Mishel 2015 for more detailed information)

Economic Policy Institute

The super-rich are not superior to people earning three to five times the average wage. An advantage like that may be necessary to encourage people to train and work hard. Or to develop those talents that the society currently chooses to reward. But what's the need for the extra?

My answer would be, **no need at all**. And that it is all about power. People who can decide their own 'slice of the cake'. Or with talents or reputation that can make a huge immediate difference to those with the power.

And a lot of it is not earned at all. It is inherited.

Had the New Right been sincere in their official creed, they would have strengthened existing rules that limited what people could get just for being born, or for hooking a rich wife or husband. You could say that no one should inherit more than five times the average national wealth – an incentive to work without being excessive.

The very opposite has happened. As I said, the *real* belief of those with power has always been Feed-the-Rich. And that the rich are such enormously superior people that their children must have Superior Genes and should have an easy life.

There used to be rich people who rejected it. Noticing, among other things, the poisonous family feelings that vast inherited wealth often produced.

But the whole trend has been the other way.

A very successful US campaign was waged against the weak limits that once existed.⁵⁹

59 <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2003/0103hunter>.

IT IS TAXING DEAD PEOPLE! CRUEL AND WICKED!

Amazingly, this fooled US Democracy. A common-sense view would be that the dead are beyond Earthly taxation. That the issue was unearned income for heirs. But this was shoved aside.

The rise of the New Right was a political swindle.

Fronted by Thatcher, who was almost certainly sincere, in as far as a Prime Minister who wants to succeed can ever be sincere.

And by Ronald Reagan, who was mostly performing the greatest role in an otherwise mediocre acting career, but who probably believed it all.

But I doubt that the people in the Think Tanks were ever sincere. I doubt they expected to save Traditional Morality, which most of them rejected for themselves and generally did not want to impose on others.

I also doubt they saw any merit in *secure* small businesses. I'd suppose that in their view, small businesses should either be stepping stones to enormous wealth, or else deserved to perish.

Ordinary voters were sold the ideas of Small Government and Liberation by Private Rebellion.

Sold an anti-government delusion.

Reagan hurt the USA by pushing policies that would suit the short-term aims of the rich. Run down welfare, but build up the military machine. And change the rules to suit business interests. And he and Thatcher boosted each other by being in broad agreement.

I'll concentrate on British failures:

"Home ownership has collapsed for adults in their prime working age, according to official figures that show those in their mid-30s to mid-40s are three times more likely to rent than 20 years ago.

"In a reflection of surging house prices and a lost decade for wage growth since the financial crisis, the Office for National Statistics found that a third of 35- to 44-year-olds in England were renting from a private landlord in 2017, compared with fewer than one in 10 in 1997."⁶⁰

I'm sure Mrs Thatcher was sincere in seeking a property-owning democracy with a vibrant economy and a revival of traditional economy. But on each of these aims, she and her heirs have entirely failed

"UK productivity slowdown worst since Industrial Revolution...

"The slowdown in Britain's productivity growth over the last decade is the worst since the start of the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago, a dismal track record that is holding back gains in living standards across the country.

"Research from academics at the University of Sussex and Loughborough University shows that the productivity growth slowdown since the 2008 financial crisis is nearly twice as bad as the previous worst decade for efficiency gains, 1971-1981, and is unprecedented in more than two centuries.

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2020/feb/10/home-ownership-ons-rent>

“Growth in productivity – a measure of economic output per hour of work – has failed to rise in Britain at anywhere near the rates recorded prior to the banking crisis, with severe consequences for living standards. Economists believe productivity growth is vital for lifting GDP and higher wages.”⁶¹

New Labour, New Foolishness

Blair in Britain and Clinton and Obama in the USA thought they needed to accept the new values introduced by Thatcher and Reagan. Just moderate them a little.

It didn't work.

Moderation Isn't Working.

Or not apart from undermining the morality that Thatcher definitely believed she was heroically saving.

Feed-the-Rich is causing bad decisions on many issues. Climate denialism from the 1990s, when scientific opinion moved overwhelmingly to agree that Carbon Dioxide levels were high and rising. That the Earth was heating even though heating from the sun was actually declining a little.

Belief that protestors are ignorant and that it's the sun rather than humans is surprisingly widespread. This even though the sun ceased to be in step with global temperatures in the 1960s. Even though the separation between the two is now massive and obvious. There is even a nice account of it from NASA, *What Is the Sun's Role in Climate Change?*⁶² But even people broadly hostile to the New Right have somehow been persuaded it is Green Foolishness.

Isaac Asimov, a scientist as well as science populariser and SF writer, once said:

“There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there has always been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that *'my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.'*”

And not only in the USA.

This is not just the New Right, but they have helped make it worse.

Both the 90% of ordinary people and the moderately privileged Next Nine have reasons to wish the General Interest to be looked after. And no inherent reason to sneer at the role of the State Machine, when it seems to be doing a good job.

Or no reason except Dogmatic Liberalism – the State Machine must do harm even when it tries to do good, just by virtue of being the State Machine.

This makes sense from a New Right world-view. Much less from a liberal-left viewpoint, but plenty of Dogmatic Liberals are to be found there.

And the 1% have good reason to encourage it, and perhaps also believe in it. When the General Interest is looked after by the State Machine, it limits some of their grand business plans.

And the New Right told them that looking after their

61 <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/feb/03/uk-productivity-slowdown-worst-since-industrial-revolution-study>

62 <https://climate.nasa.gov/blog/2910/what-is-the-suns-role-in-climate-change/>

own selfish interests would somehow be miraculously successful.

I have looked at the idea in detail. It would certainly need something supernatural for it to work.

But it's not working.

On narrow matters of economics, it does seem that mainstream commentators are shifting. Thus an Opinion piece in the *New York Times* recently said:

“How Liberals Opened the Door to Libertarian Economics

“Milton Friedman's free-market ideas found favor in a free-love era and helped redirect the country toward the right. The aftershocks of his radical arguments are still being felt today...”

“Until the 1960s, when Milton Friedman was in his 50s, pretty much the only people who'd heard of him were other economists and a few of his fellow right-wingers...”

“When Goldwater lost the presidency by a historic landslide to the social-democrat Democratic incumbent, Lyndon Johnson, the takeaway was that these Chicago-school dead-enders' anachronistic ideas had been definitively rejected by the American people.

“But the great zeitgeist shift of the 1960s was dawning and would soon destigmatize libertarianism (and libertinism) of every variety, including Milton Friedman's. The decade of free speech and anything-goes outlandishness made his previously outlandish economic ideas seem worthy of discussion in respectable circles. Opening the gates to such a figure made liberal gatekeepers feel more exquisitely, magnanimously liberal. Newsweek hired Friedman as a columnist in 1966, and by the end of the decade he, along with John Kenneth Galbraith and Paul Samuelson, was one of America's small handful of celebrity economists.”⁶³

Saying what I've been saying for years.

But I'd suppose that the New York Times would like to throw away the Economic Libertarians and keep the excessive power and wealth gained by the rich since the 1980s.

My views are much more radical.

Many of the present problems with the Internet could be solved with a generally accepted Internet Passport. No one disputes that you need a passport to physically cross from one state to another. So why not the same for intruding electronically on other societies?

It would of course be awkward for anyone planning acts of trickery for good ends. But I don't see these as a good idea.

Such things work in Hollywood movies. Likewise the hero can always outpunch any number of enemies. And people driving fast in cities hardly ever run over innocents: even the villains mostly avoid this. End up crashed and humiliated but mostly still alive.

All of this is fantasy. On the surface, people know it. But deeper down in the mind they have been misled. See irregular acts of violence and trickery as better than nasty

63 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/11/business/dealbook/milton-friedman-free-markets.html>

State Authority.

Irregular acts of violence and trickery are more authoritarian than any real-world State Authority.

And very nice when they get the outcome you want. I might possibly hire some experts in the field if a relative of mine were murdered and there was no likely legal sanction. But I'd also not complain if I were caught. My relatives are anyway not the sort of people who are likely to get murdered. And I am quite definite that it is a good idea to discourage it for everyone else.

That such vengeance might be applied sincerely but mistakenly to the wrong target.

Or applied for ends I disagree with.

Spontaneous actions include the old English custom of 'Queer-Bashing'. I'm sure left-liberals and the more decent right-wingers would like to drop such things into a totally separate category from the instances of irregular violence or trickery that they approve of. But logically, how could you?

An Internet Passport, even as a voluntary system, would ruin ideas of rebellion and subversion using the internet. But these have *already* failed where the state is strong and coherent. And produced no good outcome in the Arab Spring. And I correctly forecast that Liberation-by-Internet was an unrealistic hope, back in the year 2000 when it was very widely believed in.⁶⁴

Spontaneity is at all levels an overrated method. And prejudices against authority are excessive.

The historic truth is that Stalinist Planned Economies worked better than Classical Capitalism. And that the Mixed Economy worked better than either.

The historic truth is that attempts to restore Classical Capitalism have failed. That no Supernatural Economics is needed. That a purely materialist explanation works fine.

Or if you prefer, you can say that the supernatural exists, but not in the economic sphere. Were someone to write a solemn study entitled *The Role of the Archangel Gabriel in Determining Long-Term Interest Rates*, this would be taken to be a spoof, or else sheer lunacy. And you could believe this while still accepting that such a being as Gabriel actually existed.

Believe in religion, if it makes you a better person or a happier person. But you should at least accept that the supposed Miracle of the Market was never real.

A machine needs its gears oiled. Greed and private profit can do that, which explains the increased growth rates in post-Mao China. But if you then conclude that the gears are not needed and that just the oil would be fine, you are no longer dealing with reality.

Mainstream Subversion of Family Values.

The late Diana Rigg, who has regrettably just died but had a very satisfactory life to the age of 82, seems to me to have been a marker for the changes since the 1960s.

I doubt that anything would be much different in an Alternate World in which Diana Rigg had remained a stage actress. In which Elizabeth Shepherd kept the role

⁶⁴ <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/46-globalisation/the-web-is-always-insecure/>

of Emma Peel that she was originally given, and failed to make an impact.

But in history as it actually occurred, Diana Rigg was a marker for a gigantic shift in the whole nature of family and social life in the West.

"In the 1960s, Rigg lived for eight years with director Philip Saville, gaining attention in the tabloid press when she disclaimed interest in marrying the older and already-married Saville, saying that she had no desire 'to be respectable'."⁶⁵

Not in private life, or on the screen either.

In the 1960s, it was risky for a woman to freely admit to 'living in sin'. Just about acceptable for an actress, in days when it would have been unthinkable for both sexes to be covered by a genderless use of 'actor'. When it would have been almost unthinkable for Britain or New Zealand to have a Prime Minister openly practicing sex outside marriage. Boris Johnson is currently waiting for a previous marriage to be wound up. Jacinda Ardern is quite happy to be an unmarried mother, despite having a regular partner.

That's how much things have changed. Partly by pressure from the Left. And partly by right-wing media characters going for anything that would get them a big audience.

The 1960s British series *The Avengers* stood out in having a female co-star in a series of improbable action stories. Originally just one of several assistants to the main character, the conventional and rather old-fashioned John Steed, Cathy Gale as played by Honor Blackman rose to be the main attraction in an interesting partnership. Became popular in part due to her outfits:

"She wore knee-high boots, tailored leather suits and a trench coat at a time when such outfits were only seen in porn magazines and fetishist outlets."⁶⁶

This was breaking down normal barriers, long before Punk Rock did it. She also had a brief hit with a song called *Kinky Boots*. I did see one commentator claiming that 'kinky' at the time did not have its later meaning: that is not how I recall it.

When it touches the real world, the *Avengers* franchise had a right-wing flavour. But its actual role was subversive. Not just sadomasochistic overtones. It was also an heroic unmarried woman with *perhaps* many sexual relationships, though the program-makers always kept this hazy.

She was not the only one. But the one film made of the highly popular Modesty Blaise novels was feeble and unpopular. The scriptwriters were out of tune with the original author's notions, including the close but asexual relationship between Modesty and henchman Willie Garvin. A partnership which of course left them free for whatever fantasies the reader or viewer might care for. Much as for Steed and Emma Peel, or Cathy Gale before her.

The Modesty Blaise books had potential, and the conversion of one of them into a film was inept. It did not generate a franchise.

Honor Blackman went on to play the part of lesbian

⁶⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diana_Rigg#Personal_life
⁶⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathy_Gale#Reception

Pussy Galore in the Bond film *Goldfinger* – but she is not explicitly lesbian in that film.⁶⁷ And was herself twice married. And oddly enough, she too died this year, back in April and at the age of 94.

Diana Rigg as Emma Peel took over the Cathy Gale role, and expanded it. Helped by a switch from black-and-white to colour.

It was her breakthrough role. She was much more conventional in her later roles, as far as I know. As routine as would be plausible for the daughter of a gangster in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. An exception among Bond Girls in being murdered after being briefly married to James Bond, in line with the book. And a victim and rather helpless in the 1982 version of Agatha Christie's *Evil Under the Sun*. And had a polite, easy and chilling exit in *Game of Thrones*, which was otherwise full of torture and gruesome deaths.

For those who never watched it, *The Avengers* avoided gruesome deaths. But it very frequently had Emma Peel imprisoned, tied up and sometimes elegantly tortured. Tied to a beam serving as a Ducking Stool and with her body nicely on display while her head was held under water in *Murdersville*, for instance.

This was ordinary television, seen by people who would probably have avoided anything overtly pornographic.

It is also stuff that would no longer be allowed in mainstream film and television. A 1998 remake avoided them, and was also a muddle of several potentially good stories. It deservedly was a damp squib. But what's shown barely matters, since a basic shift in attitude has occurred.

Class and sex also comes into it. After her initial success, Diana Rigg complained that she was getting less per week than the camera man.⁶⁸ I can't see why a skilled worker should not get high pay. And that she got much less than her male co-star was typical and not often challenged in that era.

A few commentators expressed surprise that her relatively small role in *Game of Thrones* got such attention when her death was reported. But I suspect that most people under 40 would only have seen her in that role. Would confuse her *Avengers* series with the more recent comic-book and cinema series.

Leninists Against Sex?

As I said earlier I doubt that anything would be much different in an Alternate World in which Diana Rigg remained a stage actress. But she was a marker for important changes.

Shifts in values that probably did just as much to win the Cold War as Western economic success.

The Late Soviet Union came to be a rather unlikely defender of traditional working-class family values.

China has been wiser, quietly shifting its values, including a little-publicised decriminalisation of homosexuality.

This last was so little mentioned that I was unaware of it, despite taking a strong interest in Chinese matters. Overlooked by me until I noticed a strange omission in a denunciation of China by parliamentary-politics-and-gay-

67 <https://www.themarysue.com/bond-girl-goldfinger/>

68 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-54115433>

rights activist Peter Tatchell. Why was he not denouncing their harsh treatment of gays? I knew that homosexuality had been tolerated, along with sexual slavery and abuse of the under-age of both sexes, in traditional China and pre-Mao Republican China. Mao did push it underground and had it harshly punished, as part of his general clean-up.⁶⁹ This – and discouraging polyandry in Tibet, which I think still holds – was the flip-side of a very necessary reform. It was typical Leninism. And since the post-Mao leadership concentrated on the economy and had much less concern with imposing their own version of Public Morals, they quietly decriminalised homosexuality.

One concern may have been a desire to win back clever emigrants. In every known culture, there are disproportionate numbers of gay and lesbians among the highly creative. And while China has not so far allowed public or overt displays of homosexuality, public displays could be implicitly gay without being punished. And it was also a place much safer from violent attacks than most of the West.

A Chinese would be very unlikely to beat up a complete stranger for having a life-style they disliked. They'd see it as the job of the police. Or if the police chose to be tolerant, it would be unwise to offend them by doing otherwise.

Another case of Spontaneous Politics, and its general weakness in China.

Mao tried letting Spontaneous Politics run with the Cultural Revolution, perhaps responding to unexpected enthusiasm from school children when he signalled disagreement with the Party Machine over a minor cultural matter. And the uprising happened at the same time as the Western Youth Revolt.

I am sure that this will cause vast offence to people who either do not know that Maoism was very much part of 1960s Rebel Culture, or who hate anyone who mentions Off-Message Facts. An unwanted truth for former rebels now keen to hide the past, or perhaps self-deceiving. But many at the time saw it as a single global revolt. Including perhaps even Ursula Le Guin – I wish I had got the chance before her death to ask her if the heroic Odo in her novel *The Dispossessed* was a strange hybrid of Mao and Emma Goldman.

Le Guin definitely admired Emma Goldman, which I do not. I'd rate Emma Goldman as someone who'd be much safer to have as an open enemy than a supposed friend. She certainly ruined the cause of Trade Union strikers she had no connection with, by getting her lover Berkman to try unsuccessfully to murder the chief employer.⁷⁰ It undermined public support for the union and prompted the final collapse of the strike.

Regardless of what Le Guin thought at the time, or how this links with her later pseudo-China in her novel *The Telling*, the link between 1960s rebels in the West and China was real.

Being offended by Off-Message Facts is not a useful strategy.

There's an old saying, **those who can't be foolish, never**

69 See <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/how-chinese-communism-fixed-a-broken-society/>. Another of the things Western 'experts' can't deny but are generally careful not to mention.

70 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homestead_strike#Attempted_assassination_and_collapse_of_the_strike

will be wise. Which is real enough, but far too many of the heirs of the Radical Sixties have managed to evade wisdom and remain foolish.

Or migrate to an Alternative Foolishness that lacks the sincere good intentions of the original.

So while I do not needlessly offend people, I do quite often see the need.

I am sure I also caused vast offence by suggesting for a second time that ‘Queer-Bashing’ might fit the general category of ‘Popular Self-Organisation’ – assuming you even noticed that I did this. Suspecting many will not, I point it out now. And if you think about it coolly, you ought to realise in time that **I am correct.**

Irregular acts of violence and trickery are the most authoritarian system of all.

Like other authoritarian systems, the end is sometimes things I approve of. Or at least the intention was, or the good aim had some unfortunate ‘collateral damage’, but one might still see it as positive.

Unlike state power, you can imagine it going just as you want.

In the real world, it seldom does so.

People enthuse about irregular acts of violence and trickery, or are appalled by them, only after placing them in separate categories. Separate depending on whether they like the intent, as if the world was centred on them.

Different individuals sort them differently, and they get extremely offended by different views on the matter.

I am trying to correct a widespread set of false beliefs that are causing much suffering. If undermining pleasant illusions gets me resented or even hated, so be it. They can’t be aware of me sufficiently to hate me without also having been influenced by me.

If Tatchell had said something positive about the real advance for gay Chinese, I would have decided that he was *definitely* ill, or having a mental breakdown. He is one of a vast class of activists and protestors who avoid anything positive. Who do sincerely see it as a form of betrayal.

I’ve summarised it as ‘*don’t take yes for an answer*’.

It works fine when the elite are privately on your side and keen to see popular prejudices eroded. For everything else it is usually a disaster.

The Mythistan Road Traffic Death Squad

Do I want limits on freedom?

Of course I do.

And so do you.

The trick normally is to hive off unwanted instances of freedom as not being *really* freedom. This gets rid of unwanted freedoms like drug abuse, gun ownership for Britons, free commerce with currently unpopular counties, under-age individuals who feel they are ready for sex, and much else.

It used not to include legality for male homosexuals, or tolerance for lesbians. (Lesbianism was not actually illegal in Britain, but if known it was heavily discriminated against.)

Rights to drive fast, park where you like and smoke

in public places used to be part of ‘freedom’. I am old enough to remember bitter fights about those changes.

And I agree with all of the current limits, apart from the countries targeted by current limits on commerce. I don’t see China as wishing to interfere with other countries beyond their recognised border. (Which includes Tibet, and include excellent claims to the various disputed territories.) And this is a dispute about fact, not principles. I wasn’t against economic and cultural action against the Soviet Union when it genuinely was trying to swallow the entire world.

Agreeing with a particular limit on freedom makes it tempting to say that this is really a *defence* of freedom (nice). Not at all a *limit* on freedom (nasty). But this is intellectual trash. And temptations are things that should be resisted.

‘Yielding to temptations’ was a quick-and-dirty method of evading traditional Christian rules on sex without openly saying that you wanted to overturn traditional Western sexual values. It was not honest, but it was successful, as I detailed earlier.

Had the side-effect of allowing the Adventurous Rich to get a lot more freedom of action, as I detailed earlier.

Born as a white male Briton in 1950, and also turning out heterosexual, I had a lot of freedoms that an identical person born in 1980 would lack. I got a free education and free health care. It was taken for granted that there would be a choice of decent jobs when I was old enough, and a decent pension when I was old.

In the 1980s, people of my generation were sold a lie called **Trickle-Down**. This was soon discarded when it became clear it was untrue.

It might have been false even if the unleashed swarm of Adventurous Rich really had boosted the British economy beyond its achievements in the 1950s and 1960s. Simple logic should tell you that a larger slice of a smaller cake might or might not be better than a smaller slice of a larger cake. But what 90% of Britons actually got was a smaller slice of a smaller cake.

But the left let the Tories discard Trickle-Down with far too little fuss. A labour leader who actually wants to win an election should never stop mentioning it. They might also usefully borrow my phrase about this being **Feed-the-Rich Capitalism**.

I’m not expecting them to be so radical as to accept my rejection of liberal notions of freedom. A system where freedom is both treated as absolute and subject to arbitrary cut-offs.

Subject to ‘Rule of Law’, they would say.

But not ‘**Trust Me, I’m a Lawyer**’.

It is taken for granted that lawyers can try all sorts of dishonesty, to serve the best interest of their client.

The standard British formula is *to give your client the best possible legal defence*. I’d sooner see it changed to *stop your client being treated unfairly, but also not twist what you see as untrue or unfair*. But I doubt it will happen soon

But law is defined by judges, surely?

Yes. But judges are lawyers who get promoted after many years playing such games.

Judges are generally impartial for individual justice. They show class and race bias and may bend the rules to defend tradition.

When it comes to Constitutions, judgements are often ridiculous.

Still, it is hard to see how Western societies could easily replace them. I don't think we should be trying to impose our very imperfect system on China. And I note that the West has been losing the battle to impose them elsewhere, after its appalling and incompetent behaviour in the 1990s. But the Chinese system would not be acceptable in Europe or North America, even if there were a party competent to run it.

I say 'Europe or North America' rather than 'the West', because similar systems to China exist and are popular in both Japan and Singapore, which are commonly listed as Western despite geography and race. There are free elections, but the dominant party wins comfortably in Singapore, and has done so with one brief break in Japan.

Britain before it democratised did have a brief attempt with the Utilitarians. They tried, citing '*the greatest happiness of the greatest number*' as an idea. And failed, with their ideas being consolidated into standard political thinking by John Stuart Mill, son of one of the leading Utilitarians.

I have said elsewhere what I think wrong with his work.⁷¹ But elements of Utilitarianism are found in the supposed rationalism of the New Right. So I thought of a way to bust it.

Imagine adding the nation of 'Mythistan' to the real and rather authoritarian countries for former Soviet Central Asia. Having dominated by the Church of Reformed Manichaeism and speakers of a Tocharian language, neither of which currently exist in the real world. But might exist in some world where history went a little differently.

In reaction to the high number of road traffic deaths, the government authorises the Mythistan Road Traffic Death Squad. These stop a random selection of dangerous drivers. If the person is not a doctor, law enforcer, government official or well-connected business person, they are beheaded. Their severed heads are then displayed at petrol stations, as a stark warning to other drivers.

The weird thing is, this would almost certainly work. It would save far more lives than it took.

It does fit the Utilitarian rule, '*the greatest happiness of the greatest number*'.

But it is also blatantly unjust.

And checking back using the Wiki, I found that Utilitarians had their own version of the meaningless mathematics that New Right economists use to disguise their nonsense as rational. Jeremy Bentham developed a fancy 'felicific calculus'. And if the Wiki summary is accurate, it wholly omits the matter of fairness.⁷²

John Stuart Mill justified the elitist rule of the East India Company, which till almost the end excluded non-Whites from power, even though some of them had fully mastered

71 <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/040-politics/how-john-stewart-mill-twisted-the-idea-of-liberty/>

72 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felicific_calculus

Western culture. That's typical of liberals ancient and modern – always twisting fine-sounding principles to serve the powerful.

In the real world, there will never be a Road Traffic Death Squad. The people with power are much more sympathetic to those who *cause* accidents than to the typical victim. 'Pedestrian' used to be an insult, though this is one of many technocratic attitudes now unpopular. But penalties for road accidents are much milder than those for other forms of violent crime.

I'll probably cause offense by calling it **violent crime**, which is fine by me, since I am factually correct.

The real-world Death Squads were exclusively for the defence of the rich. Some victims were law-abiding individuals whose protests annoyed the privileged.⁷³

The Official Restoration of Capitalism

The Labour Party needs to start saying that Thatcherism never met its promises.

The doctrine was that Britain in the 1980s needed an Official Restoration of Capitalism, with all elements of socialism declared wrong.

If it was sincere, it ceased to be so during the 1987 economic crisis. This has been mostly forgotten, since the Soviet collapse that began in 1989 suddenly made all forms of socialism look bad.

What had actually happened was a Soviet failure in the 1960s and 1970s. This saved bad Western economic policies that were supposedly a restoration of freedoms lost since 1914.

The thinkers mostly intended the Official Restoration of Middle-Class Morality to be a sham. They wanted open sexual freedom, not just privately for themselves as most of the politicians did.

The trend was already that way. The society relaxed on most issues, but had a sharp reaction against under-age sex. People felt differently when they realised their own children might be at risk.

As far as I know, there are no moves yet to relax on incest or on polygamy or polyandry.

But on economic issues, if the thinkers did believe in Libertarian nonsense, they always backed down in the face of power.

Tax-and-spend remains the norm, but the tax burden is born more by ordinary people. A lot of the benefits go to the rich and to big corporations.

Small businesses are supposed to either grow big or perish.

They allow harassment and luring through advertising. And are astonished when this produces a degraded society.

I don't use words lightly, or with intent to mislead. When I say 'degraded' I mean just that.

But there are also reasons for hope. Socialism didn't fail, it just ran into more complications than were expected.

Instant Virtue does not happen in the real world.

Gradual improvement can and does.

73 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_squad#History

Artificial Intelligence: Some Issues

By Mark Cowling

Introduction.

Following its disastrous performance at the last general election, Labour is naturally having an extensive rethink of its policies. Some of this is reproduced in Labour Affairs 310 (August 2020). Artificial intelligence is having increasingly pervasive effects, and needs to be considered as part of the background against which policies are developed. In this article I want to reflect on the potential of artificial intelligence for human liberation, but also on its darker side: its acceleration of the tendencies of neoliberalism, and in particular of class polarisation and its potential for the surveillance of minorities. What role might it play in a socialist future? Labour must grasp both the threats and the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence.

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence.

There is a substantial and increasing volume of literature on artificial intelligence.¹

The Oxford Dictionary definition of artificial intelligence is: theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human **intelligence**, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages. Artificial intelligence works by gathering huge quantities of data and then analysing it. According to Smith and Browne,² we are ending this decade with about 25 times as much data as at the beginning of the decade.

The quantity of data that tech companies hold on individuals is enormous. One Viennese citizen eventually prised out of Facebook a CD-ROM containing 1200 pages of data.³ He had “consented” to this by using Facebook. Something similar happens when people use websites. These invariably want to place a cookie on your computer. You have “consented” to this by allowing websites to place cookies on your computer. This allows them to harvest some of your data. Prior to 2016 this would also involve “consenting” to other third-party providers harvesting your data. A calculation in 2008 suggested that it would take 76 full days a year to read through all the agreements. This will have grown considerably since that time.⁴ A team of researchers found in 2015 that a visitor to the 100 most popular websites would accumulate no less than 6000 cookies, 83% of unrelated to the initial website visited. This type of excuse for harvesting virtually

unlimited quantities of data led the European Union to develop its General Data Protection Regulation in 2016. This places some limitations on what people are actually consenting to. US citizens do not enjoy this protection. This leads Zuboff to describe the current era as one of Surveillance Capitalism: ‘a rogue mutation of capitalism, involving concentrations of wealth, knowledge and power unprecedented in human history; the foundational framework of a surveillance economy ... A threat to human nature’.⁵ This is by no means the full definition, but it gives the general flavour of her book. The basis of Google’s massive accumulation of wealth is its unprecedented intrusion into personal life. With the ability to probe what people are doing online, using cheap cameras to photograph geographic locations, and cheap storage, ‘Your whole life will be searchable’ as Larry Page, one of the founders of Google, remarked in 2001, with no concern about how this would be intruding into personal life.⁶ Google and Facebook lobbied vigorously to oppose any restrictions on their right to intrude, Google spending around \$18 million each year on lobbying in Washington, and it is also the largest individual lobbyist in the EU.⁷ Another intrusion fostered by Google is the ability to track one’s location via one’s smart phone, all for the benefit of advertisers – thousands of locations can be tracked each day.⁸ Currently with the Covid-19 pandemic this is a particularly delicate issue. There is the possibility of using smart phones as a way of tracing contacts who may have been infected with the virus. Indeed, both they and the person who infected them may actually be asymptomatic, but nonetheless have the possibility of infecting others with consequences which may even be fatal. However, intruding into people’s lives in this way is also potentially a serious violation of their civil liberty. The British government is currently attempting to enhance the rather dismal performance of its “world beating” (Boris Johnson) contact tracing system with an app jointly developed by Apple and Google.

This capacity for intrusion can have positively sinister results. In June 2013 the Guardian revealed that nine major US companies which handle data, including Apple and Microsoft, had signed up for a program called PRISM, which allowed the NSA (the US National Security Agency) to spy at will on anyone who made use of programs provided by these companies.⁹ The Guardian knew about this thanks to Edward Snowden, who absconded from an NSA

centre bearing about a million documents, which kept journalists busy for the next year or so. Intrusion by the NSA was prima facie a violation of the Fourth Amendment, which guarantees US citizens security from unwarranted searches and seizures, and, obviously, there are similar expectations in other Western democracies.

A variety of dilemmas for tech companies arise: some intrusions by security services are legitimate, for example attempts to locate extremists planning terrorist incidents; should they be disrupting anti-vaccination groups? Should they be disrupting the glorification of terrorism? Can they distinguish that from legitimate discussion of terrorism? Likewise, for websites encouraging sex with children, which are fostering serious lawbreaking, but need to be distinguished from academic discussions of paedophilia.

The capabilities of artificial intelligence are developing extremely rapidly. One impressive recent example was the victory of a computer against the world champion of the game of Go, which is particularly complex and difficult to get a computer to deal with competently. Spectators were particularly impressed with a move made by the computer which made no apparent sense to them, but which turned out to be a stroke of genius, and was effectively the program being creative.¹⁰ All kinds of beneficial applications keep emerging. Three examples in the field of medicine: there is a serious and increasing problem of bacteria which are resistant to antibiotics, but a computer program was set to work and looked at less likely possibilities with the result that a superior antibiotic was discovered in an unlikely place; computers can now check the results of x-rays and scans in some cases more reliably than doctors; robot assisted surgery is developing rapidly. The modelling of the climate and its development presents extremely complex problems, but scientists are getting better at this task, in part thanks to artificial intelligence. Another area in which there are beneficial developments helped by artificial intelligence is agriculture. Tractors can now plough or spray very precisely thanks to GPS positioning, reducing the tendency for sprays to go further than their targets. Indeed, tractors could soon be self-driving as well. There is an ongoing problem in Britain of getting hold of workers to do the hard labour of harvesting fruit and vegetables, and if artificial intelligence would get some of this work done by robots it would be helpful.¹¹

Obviously, however, there is a darker side. Staying with agriculture, particularly in the United States, huge numbers of animals such as pigs are basically kept remotely by computer in conditions which pay little attention to their welfare. Pigs are very intelligent animals, and it is particularly cruel to do this to creatures capable of playing simple computer

games. In the military field, drones are operated using artificial intelligence which can go wrong, with the result that innocent people are killed, which is terrible in itself and which thwarts the military objectives. The demands of the computer industry can lead to pollution and using up scarce resources.

A new stage of capitalism?

We are entering a new phase of capitalism. Marx identified stages such as cottage industry, in which merchants go round to cottages in which, for example, weaving is being carried out; they bring with them fresh supplies of wool and take away woven cloth, making their profit from the labour of the weavers. Next comes association, in which the weavers are gathered together in one place; then machinery, in which more machinery is introduced; then manufacturing, in which there is the application of steam or electric power; as this develops there is a system of machines. This is about as far as things got in Marx's lifetime. Another major development was an assembly line on the model developed by Taylor and pioneered in the Ford motor factory. Next, with the increasing development of computers, comes post-Fordism in which rather than "any colour you like, so long as it's black" is replaced by a much more diverse set of possibilities, with very many models and options of automobile being available. There is also much more diversity in every sphere, so that with single keystroke input publishing a small new magazine becomes possible much more easily, leading to many new titles becoming available. All sorts of new enterprises can be started more easily, as viewers of Dragon's Den will be well aware.

Automation has advanced very considerably. A viewing of Inside the Factory with Gregg Wallace rapidly makes this apparent. Assembly lines appear only rarely. Instead the workers are largely supervisors of a system of machines. Their role is quality control, and moving the product from one process to another. Just to take two examples among many: Heinz baked beans are made with haricot beans imported from the United States. Some of these are perfectly nutritious but discoloured. This used to be dealt with by people with spoons scooping up unsatisfactory beans. They are now detected by laser and dispatched for animal feed by puff of air. Walkers crisps are made from potatoes with a lower sugar content than standard potatoes. This is to stop them becoming discoloured. In spite of this starting point, some crisps are still too dark. Each crisp gets photographed, and discoloured crisps are disposed of automatically. When it comes to warehouse operations, human beings are not needed inside some warehouses; everything is controlled from outside.

The current degree of automation enables very large quantities of products to be the work of relatively few people. Thus, all the many Heinz products made

in Britain, including 3 million cans of baked beans, in a factory which works round the clock and seven days a week, require a workforce of about 1500. This explains why, although the UK remains the seventh-largest country for manufacturing in the world, the manufacturing workforce is much smaller than it used to be. Between the early 1980s and 2018 the manufacturing workforce shrank by 3 million, representing a fall from 21% of the UK workforce to 8%. Despite this, from 1970 to the present day the country has ranked somewhere between sixth and eighth in the world, with China now top, the United States second, Japan third, Germany fourth, South Korea fifth, and then France, Britain, Italy and various other countries moving in and out of 6th to 9th place. Bastani points to similar effects of artificial intelligence and the use of robots in US industry.¹²

The increasing application of artificial intelligence is likely to result in increasingly automated operations. Thinking now of distribution, in an Amazon warehouse the workforce follows instructions from a computer about where items which form part of a customer's order can be found. Jeff Bezos would obviously like to increase his wealth, so it would be helpful if a robot could do the selection and wrapping currently done by people. It could then load the parcels onto a self-driving lorry and move them on to their destination. Even better, maybe a drone could deliver the parcels. We are rapidly moving from post-Fordism with automation to a stage of artificial intelligence.

While this stage obviously offers the potential for an unprecedented degree of human liberation, at the moment there is a sharp increase in polarisation, with the massive accumulation of wealth by the tech firms at one pole and a growing army of people stuck on minimum wage at the other.¹³

Moreover, Americans (and almost certainly the same is true of British people) trust their government less and less. In 2017 only 18% of Americans trusted their government.¹⁴ Now that Trump has dealt so very badly with the coronavirus crisis, there is every reason to think that those who still remain alive trust the government even less. Mike Pompeo, US Secretary of State, visiting London with a view to stirring up anti-Chinese and anti-Russian sentiments, said amongst other things that the United States government did not go about assassinating people! Numerous public figures in Latin America and innocent victims of drone strikes demonstrate that this was a blatant lie, as a viewing of the film *Bowling for Columbine* reminds us: the film includes a section which lists the countries in which the United States has intervened in order to prop up dictatorships and remove figures who opposed the US interests. The role of the CIA in replacing elected president Allende in Chile and replacing him with General Pinochet is a particularly striking example. The United States may be a democracy, but it is one which has committed extensive state crimes. When leaders tell blatant lies of this sort it is hardly surprising that public trust is so low.

Artificial Intelligence and Employment/Unemployment.

Previous technological developments have led to a change in employment patterns, which can be extremely unpleasant for the individuals concerned. In the nineteenth century many people were forced off the land and ended up in noisy, unsafe factories working long hours and living in bad conditions, as charted so brilliantly in *Capital*. A major disruption is extremely likely thanks to artificial intelligence. Call centres are likely to require far fewer staff, as voice recognition software improves and enquiries can be dealt with by computer programs.¹⁵ Kessler charts how, since around 2002, the bulk of the growth in the US employment market is in the form of self-employment. People are increasingly independent contractors, and therefore do not get the fringe benefits (holiday pay, sick pay, medical cover, pensions etc.) enjoyed by employees.¹⁶ Whilst highly skilled professionals, notably programmers, website designers etc. can do very well as independent contractors, these and similar professionals actually employed by the tech firms can also earn spectacular amounts, they are a tiny portion of the workforce, whereas for unskilled workers such as cleaners and janitors, not only is there the problem of fringe benefits mentioned above, but overall earnings are typically lower than those of cleaners lucky enough to be employees.¹⁷ At its worst, the gig economy produces conditions approaching those of debt slaves, who found that once actual slavery had ended, they became bound to the former slave owner as a result of indebtedness. Kessler found examples of people who were in something resembling this condition as a result of purchasing their vehicles with assistance from Uber.¹⁸ Strikes, the traditional weapon of the working class, have become increasingly ineffective: in the United States they have diminished from around 300 per year in the 1950s to around 20 per year since 2000.¹⁹ It is little wonder: Americans are desperately insecure. In 2015 a report by the Federal Reserve found that 47% of Americans could not cover an unexpected expense of \$400 from their savings or their credit card.²⁰ They are likely to have inadequate medical insurance, so such an emergency is only too possible.

Another dark side of this new stage of capitalism is that some of what it depends on is linked to highly toxic labour, notably the manufacture of silicon chips and lithium batteries.²¹ A different form of toxic labour, much of it performed in the Philippines, is an army of people who spend their days working out whether digital content is so obnoxious and pernicious that it needs to be eliminated. Dyer Witherford says that the number involved is 100,000, but there is every reason to think that this will have grown considerably since.²² Or what about the by now well-known situation that prevailed at the plant in China where iPhones are manufactured, where conditions are so oppressive and regulated that many workers were driven to suicide?²³

In the foreseeable future an extensive disruption can be foreseen as very large numbers of workers are

displaced by artificial intelligence. Thus factories will be increasingly staffed by robots; shelves will be stacked and clothes folded by robots;²⁴ drivers will be replaced by self-driving vehicles – according to Russell cars in cities will largely be replaced by free self-driving buses;²⁵ perhaps the poor people forced to watch a daily diet of extreme pornography will be replaced by computer programs; low-level legal work will also be computerised – computers did better than law professors at analysing non-disclosure agreements; insurance underwriting will soon largely be done by computer, as will at least some medical diagnoses, as will telemarketing, credit checking, tax accountancy, operating checkouts and baking.²⁶

In contrast to the accumulation of poverty at the bottom end of society, there is a massive accumulation of wealth at the top. Russell reproduces an alarming graph produced originally by the US Bureau of Labor which shows from around 1970 onwards productivity doubling by 2005 while the rewards going to workers in the sector which produces goods remained static.²⁷ As Susskind points out, Amazon, Google and Facebook have an accumulation of wealth roughly equivalent to the GDP of Canada.²⁸ There are structural reasons why this is so: these firms possess an oligopoly of data, making them hard to displace; and they have relatively few employees, meaning that the number of people who benefit from their position is relatively small. As factories become automated, work previously taken offshore to, for example, China, will increasingly be done by robots in, for example, Germany.²⁹ Plainly, extremely dramatic disruptions are in prospect. At least some of the people whose lives are disrupted will turn to crime, and doubtless their crimes will be detected using artificial intelligence. The socialist solution to this may well be a universal basic income, which will be briefly discussed below.

Artificial intelligence, Crime and Policing.

The Internet plays a major role in propagating and facilitating terrorism. ISIS does a great deal of its recruiting and basic training by posting appropriate videos online. The horrific attack by an Australian in New Zealand on March 6, 2019, in which 50 innocent Muslims were killed, was doubtless originally inspired via the Internet, and also was publicised on the Internet. This obviously poses major problems for security and intelligence services. They have a legitimate interest in trying to prevent horrific crimes of this sort. This involves trying to remove material glorifying terrorism from the Internet, and they will also naturally want to try to find the authors of such material. But there are also dangers to civil liberty. What about people who are simply curious and have no intention whatsoever of engaging in terrorism? What about academic researchers? How do you distinguish a group of academic researchers, who are posting material produced by terrorists with a view to discussing it, from a group of actual terrorists? Obviously similar issues arise with other forms of criminal activity, for example fraud, paedophilia, or posting death threats.

The above difficulties are, however, a mere foretaste of things to come! In 2013 Harvard researchers managed to intervene in the brain of a volunteer in such a way that he was able to control the tail of a rat with his thoughts. Other experiments in which one volunteer was able to

control the hand of a second volunteer on the other side of a university campus simply with his thoughts, and, in a different experiment a volunteer was able to control the movements of a cockroach with his thoughts. Apart from the interesting idea of something going wrong and the cockroach getting in control of the volunteer, a scenario worthy of Kafka, in the future it might be possible for ISIS to turn captives into suicide bombers controlled by the thoughts of an ISIS leader.³⁰

Another possibility is the use of transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS), which is definitely able to increase alertness and cognitive performance, but it can also stimulate or inhibit emotional responses.³¹ This obviously raises all kinds of possibilities. A particularly concerning one is that our emotional responses are an important part of how we recognise particular environments as inviting or threatening. This in turn could be adapted for autonomous weapons systems, meaning battlefield weapons with a sense of the nature of their environment. Apart from the potential to kill the wrong people by accident, autonomous weapons systems could also get left around after the end of a particular conflict, and go on killing people long after the conflict was over, rather on the model of the 110 million or so landmines estimated to be still in the ground.³² Yonck agrees with a campaign underway to ban the use of autonomous weapons systems before they are properly developed. The campaign is, in fact, reminiscent of Robert Oppenheimer, who organised the Manhattan project which developed the atom bomb, proposing some form of international control (for a much more detailed account of the need to limit the use of autonomous weapons see Tegmark).³³

Affective computing is potentially also extremely useful for cyber criminals. If a computer program can recognise and manipulate an emotional state, this can be used to facilitate all kinds of scams. People as sophisticated as the former editor of *Psychology Today*, an expert in affective computing, can be tricked into corresponding with a chat bot; according to an estimate in 2014 about half of Internet traffic is generated by bots, and some 30% of these bots are malicious, with fully 20% of Internet traffic being generated by impersonator bots.³⁴ Another unpleasant possibility is criminal intervention in the running of pacemakers, internally worn defibrillators, externally worn insulin pumps and similar devices. The wrong sort of intervention has generally not been guarded against by manufacturers, but would obviously be potentially rapidly fatal, making blackmail a serious possibility.³⁵ Affective computing can also be misused by the police in the course of interrogations. A suspect can be induced to “remember” things which did not actually happen.³⁶

The role of affective computing in recent elections is worth a study in its own right. The team which got Trump elected in 2016 made extensive use of very carefully targeted newsfeeds and advertisements. At least some of these appear to have originated from Russia, which has an interest in keeping the West divided, for which purpose Trump’s vigorous America First policies serve very well. The same issues arise for the Brexit referendum, both in terms of the skilled use of affective computing by the leave camp and apparent Russian intervention in favour of Brexit. The tech firms have been trying to tighten up on this issue in time for the 2020 presidential election,

and other elections elsewhere. None of this is to suggest that extensive emotional manipulation using artificial intelligence is the only thing which wins the popular vote. However, given that Hillary Clinton actually got more votes than Trump, and that the Brexit referendum would have gone the other way on a swing of 3%, the role of affective computing may have been enough to swing both votes. Artificial intelligence has thus almost certainly facilitated serious crimes against the democratic process.

A particular issue in the area of policing is the role of facial recognition technology. Facebook is devoting very considerable effort in this area, and is able to identify mood, gaze, gait, hairstyle, clothing, activities, interests, body type and posture.³⁷ Apple are also interested in facial recognition technology, and the more recent iPhones are unlocked by facial recognition. Payments can also be made by facial recognition. Apple are therefore very confident about their technology, although it may have difficulty with identical twins. Facebook's intention in analysing biometric markers is to modify human behaviour for the benefit of advertisers, but this ability can also be used by states to modify the behaviour of citizens. Back in the 1970s psychologists debated the ethics of behaviour modification and came up with a code of ethical practice. Zuboff wants something similar for programmers of facial recognition technology.³⁸ A full discussion of the use made by the Chinese state of facial recognition technology would extend this article excessively, but the current intention is plainly to control the life of Chinese citizens in considerable detail, and without most of the restraints which are found in liberal democracies. A good example of a restraint on police power achieved in this area in Britain came in August 2020. Ed Bridges, a citizen of South Wales, objected to the way in which the South Wales police had collected his biometric personal data, once when he was Christmas shopping and once when he was on a peaceful demonstration. The South Wales police maintain secretive watchlists, and, once they have collected the data of anyone who comes in range of their cameras is then compared with a watchlist. The Court of Appeal agreed with Mr Bridges, whose case had been taken up by Liberty, a charity whose purpose is to maintain civil liberties. South Wales police and other British police forces will now have to seriously rethink their use of facial recognition technology. Liberty note that several US cities have banned the use of facial recognition technology, and argue that we should do the same in Britain.

Ferguson provides a thorough account of the use of artificial intelligence for policing purposes based on a unit of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) called the RACR or Real-Time Critical Analysis and Response Division. Roll call for police officers is a bit different from what one would expect from the television. They are provided with a digital map of their area, complete with a crime forecast which shows the city blocks where the algorithmic analysis of large quantities of data, harvested from some of the 4000 databases which monitor everybody's behaviour,³⁹ suggest that there is likely to be trouble. When they are on patrol reports of a gang fight result in the officers getting data about what they are likely to find sent to their mobile phones: the history of gang activity in the area, likely tensions between gangs, and updates on how things are progressing, so that they

know what to expect when they arrive.⁴⁰ The possible downside of this is that it may just be giving a scientific gloss to existing prejudices, particularly racial prejudices, reinforcing existing bias, fear and distrust. Moreover, in the United States at least, there is invariably an exemption for law enforcement officers from any restrictions on the access to data or to its dissemination.⁴¹ Putting big data at the service of grossly biased, incompetent, oppressive, revenue driven police departments such as the one in Ferguson Missouri is likely to make bad policing more efficiently bad!⁴² Data driven policing is one response to the outrage felt in black communities over numerous police killings of unarmed African-Americans. But there is also the possibility of monitoring and predicting police misconduct, and analysing the social and environmental roots of criminal behaviour.⁴³

There is theory that criminal behaviour is located in particular networks, and this can be quite useful if it is combined with the analysis of data using artificial intelligence. For example, in one analysis of the situation in Boston, belonging to a small network comprising 4% of the city's population raised one's chances of being murdered by 900%.⁴⁴ An obvious observation about US murder statistics is that the relatively high murder rate of nearly 5 per hundred thousand of population is quite a lot higher than that in the UK with its 1.2 per hundred thousand (Wikipedia). One obvious explanation is the unfortunate US habit of people shooting each other, although there are doubtless a whole series of other factors. A lot of Canadians possess rifles for shooting game, but Canadians murder each other at about a third of the rate of the United States. Much of what follows concerns negative aspects of big data policing, but it does have useful potential, notably in identifying forced migration for purposes of sexual exploitation, and men liable to commit domestic violence.⁴⁵

Ferguson is concerned that big data policing may simply reflect existing biases. For example, black and white populations imbibe marijuana at much the same rate, but arrests for marijuana possession are overwhelmingly of black people. This is particularly heartbreaking now that an increasing number of US states have decided that marijuana is enjoyable rather than criminal. Similarly, imprisonment rates are notoriously skewed with far more blacks in prison than would be expected from their numbers in the population. Presumably part of the explanation is that this is a legacy from the days of slavery. However, similar phenomena are found in Britain, with more black people than would be warranted from their numbers subjected to being stopped and searched, having their car stopped, or ending up in prison.⁴⁶ Moreover, if the police focus on any part of the population – for example, members of the clergy – they are bound to discover more criminality in that group. The assumption up to now is that the database is reasonably accurate, but this is by no means always the case, and plainly if the data put into it is wrong, for example it identifies infants as gang members, the results are going to be garbage as well.⁴⁷ Moreover, because police databases are held in a secretive way, it is extremely hard to challenge wrongful inclusion in one.⁴⁸

If the database focuses on black areas, this may in turn justify aggressive policing – in Britain and excessive use of stop and search, which is simply a feature of everyday

life for young black men in some areas. Even more alarming is the aerial surveillance by the FBI of peaceful protests in the wake of the shooting of black people – essentially the immediate precursors of the current Black Lives Matter.⁴⁹ Of course, things have been exacerbated by the way in which aggressive policing and white vigilante actions have been encouraged in the current round of protests by President Trump. Indeed, the very detailed level of information available to government can feel like something very reminiscent of Big Brother.⁵⁰ Data is collected from police officers in a manner which is prone to vicious circles. For example, just being stopped becomes an additional reason for them stopping you next time, and if you are on the Chronic Violent Offender list you are likely to be stopped in an aggressive manner, making it more likely you will object, just as a violent offender would.⁵¹ This can have very serious results, notably in the case of the shooting of Mark Duggan, which triggered off the riots of 2011. There is also a class dimension to these issues. Young people of all races and classes get drunk, use drugs and engage in minor criminality, but those at the top of the social scale do not generally get their collars felt. Indeed, if they are British and members of the Bullington Club they end up in the Cabinet. Some officers are responsible for much more than their share of incidents where they use excessive force, and a more beneficial use for big data is to identify them and retrain them.⁵²

Ferguson makes many useful observations, but says nothing about crimes of the powerful, which a typical police patrol does not encounter. Certainly not state crime; not the sort of corporate crime which produces pollution or seriously faulty goods; not fraud including, of course, increasingly sophisticated Internet fraud;⁵³ not criminally unsafe working conditions, nor dangerously long working hours with insufficient breaks for rest and refreshment.

A socialist future?

How could artificial intelligence contribute to a socialist future? How could it contribute to getting there?

While Wikipedia and associated wikis could hardly be considered socialist enterprises, a collective enterprise of this sort, partially automated, and not for profit, could certainly feature as part of a socialist society. Similarly, as Susskind points out,⁵⁴ the use of Creative Commons licences allows the sharing of knowledge freely on an unprecedented scale, with over a billion documents included. The authorities can increasingly monitor traffic, air pollution, utility usage, lighting and so forth. Obviously, this can take on a Big Brother aspect, but it has also the possibility of fine-tuning traffic lights or working out ways of reducing air pollution in previously unprecedented but beneficial detail.⁵⁵ Protests can be facilitated by the new media, including Occupy and the Arab Spring (and, indeed, the UK riots of 2011).⁵⁶

Another interesting possibility is the – generally anti-authoritarian – use of political hacking, or more prosaically the vigorous use of freedom of information legislation. Susskind identifies some threats to democracy. The first of these is what he calls perception control: if you are getting your news from an online source, then the control of the content and bias of the news gives considerable

power to whoever is exercising it.⁵⁷ Moreover, political reality becomes increasingly fragmented. Susskind gives the example of news originating from Twitter: if you are a Republican 90% of the tweets you receive will be from Republican sources; if you are a Democrat 90% of your tweets will come from Democrat sources.⁵⁸ Added to this, particularly facilitated by Donald Trump, is the debasement of the term fake news, which has come to mean, for him at least, anything you disagree with. Thus, also the idea that there is now post-truth politics, which in turn leads to a fragmented reality in which your group effectively lives in a different world from mine; and this is exacerbated still worse by the very precise tailoring of political messages to increasingly narrow groups of people. Moreover, all the previous problems of distortion are exacerbated still further by the existence of bots, largely supporting Trump in the USA, and generating a third of tweets in the run-up to the EU referendum in the UK, almost all of them pro-leave.⁵⁹ Similar observations about the debasement of public life may be found in Foer: he notes that journalists tend now to relentlessly pursue clicks on their publication's website rather than an important story for its own sake.⁶⁰ On the other hand, he notes an encouraging trend in the opposite direction: the New York Times markets itself as a responsible publication in contrast to the debased behaviour of Facebook. In the immediate aftermath of Trump's electoral victory, it gained 130,000 new subscribers.⁶¹ Subscriptions to the Guardian have very similar motivation. In marked contrast, Facebook actively boasts about its ability to manipulate behaviour.⁶² The Covid-19 crisis has been a corrective to this: political leaders cannot simply invent reality to suit themselves, as the existence of large numbers of sick and dead Americans demonstrates. As a result of his inept handling of the crisis, public levels of trust in Trump are at a low ebb, in contrast to, for example, Angela Merkel, who is held in high esteem because her handling of the crisis has been based on sound scientific evidence. Likewise the very substantial Conservative lead at the time of the election has eroded to nothing as a result of inept handling of the Covid 19 crisis.

Susskind belongs to the broad liberal tradition, but some of the issues he considers would also be of interest in building a socialist society, such as what should be done about personal good or bad luck, or the desire for recognition of the kind being asserted, for example, by the Black Lives Matter movement. he makes a call for transparency in the construction of these algorithms so that it can be challenged, and also for the tech firms to provide a straightforward explanation of what they are doing.⁶³ There is also, he argues, a need to break up the extreme concentration of power in the hands of the tech firms. while socialists would surely want the wealth of the tech firms applied for the general good of society rather than just as their owners see fit, problems of undue concentration of power do not simply go away in a socialist society. There is a nice illustration of this from Foer. He talks about almost accidentally starting an uneven battle with Amazon, and finding a whole variety of academics unwilling to fall out with them because they are afraid that evil things will happen to their books on the Amazon website.⁶⁴ One is reminded of authors wondering what they could get away with in the Soviet Union. Although, thankfully, Jeff Bezos does not, as yet, have access to the

Gulag.

Foer identifies a very important issue which is frequently written about in the Guardian, namely the avoidance/evasion of tax by the tech firms, by employing every device known to tax accountants and lawyers, and creatively inventing new ones, thus paying far less tax than the likes of Walmart.⁶⁵

Marx and Engels identified figures such as Robert Owen, Fourier and Saint Simon as utopian socialists who sketched out what a socialist society might look like, in the case of Fourier, particularly, in delightful detail, but who failed to provide the economic and social analysis of existing society and any realistic political means of getting from here to there. Bastani provides something rather like utopian socialism for today, sketching out possibilities based on artificial intelligence and science which is available now or which could easily be developed in the near future, but without really dealing with the issue of how to get from here to there. He identifies five crises: climate change; scarcity of some resources, notably energy, water, and some minerals; an ageing population in the advanced countries; a growth in the number of poor people and most important of all, increased unemployment based on the rise of artificial intelligence.⁶⁶ The banking crisis of 2008 demonstrated that there is socialism for the rich, where failed bankers get bailed out,⁶⁷ while poverty and the use of food banks at the other pole has grown, and, in the UK, by 2016 60% of households in poverty contain somebody in employment.⁶⁸ Yet there is enough solar energy available to easily meet the demands of humanity and, when the problems of mining on the near-earth asteroid Psyche are solved, there will be no scarcity at all of a variety of minerals.⁶⁹ With an abundance of computing power, of energy and of minerals, there will be much less need to work at mundane tasks, leaving people free to be creative in a luxurious society.⁷⁰ If this is basically Marx's vision of communism, strikingly Keynes had the same view of a society beyond scarcity.⁷¹ Intriguingly, Russell suggests that much of this might take the form of creating in virtual reality.⁷² Fuchs⁷³ points out that Marx in the *Grundrisse* notes that there is a contradiction between the increasing productivity of labour on the one hand, making a radical reduction of working time possible, and value and surplus value being based upon labour, and also introduces the notion of general social knowledge becoming a direct force of production and increasingly controlling social life. A vision of a society of plenty can be gained from what has happened in agriculture. Throughout history, most of humanity has made its living by working on the land, yet in Britain, France, Italy and the United States a tiny portion of the population, between 1% and 4%, makes its living on the land, something which would have seemed impossible in the past.⁷⁴ Rising world populations pose a problem when it comes to meat production, which could in principle be easily solved by the production of synthetic meat,⁷⁵ with the use of far less natural resources than required to produce meat today, particularly beef. Alternatively, of course, everybody could move on to something close to a vegan diet without the need for any scientific advances.

Bastani argues that the changes required by humanity's situation render neoliberal politics, which has brought us the banking crisis, the Grenfell disaster, the Carillion

collapse and overpriced privatised rail companies in Britain, and similar phenomena elsewhere, outdated: a collectivist approach is needed. He sees unions devoting some of the money in their pension funds to creating useful jobs and facilities in Britain rather than seeking profits abroad. The objective should be that more and more important basic services such as public transport should simply be free on the model of bus passes.⁷⁶ Bastani recognises that he is only sketching the outlines of a socialist future, and certainly does not think that the changes he wishes to see would represent an endpoint in human history; they are rather a beginning.⁷⁷ While this presents some sensible ideas, I describe what he offers as utopian socialist because there is no real overall account of how you might get from here to there even in Britain let alone elsewhere.

Srnicek and Williams⁷⁸ try to address this question. They argue that the decline of social democratic politics and the growth of what they describe as folk politics, meaning a politics which concentrates on specific issues, which comes and goes quickly in the way that, for example, the various protests about aspects of globalisation, or the Occupy movements did, means that people on the left tend not to look at global and abstract issues of the kind which need to be addressed in order to bring about significant change. The victory of neoliberalism has led to a disillusionment with electoral politics, and reduced participation rates.⁷⁹ What is needed, they argue, is an aspiration for the flourishing of all humanity. This involves the traditional social democratic provision of basic needs, the expansion of social resources, and the development of technological capacities.⁸⁰ But this is a form of humanism without a pre-established end point.⁸¹ The left, they argue, should mobilise around a post-work consensus.⁸² They note that between 47 and 80% of existing jobs are capable of being automated out of existence.⁸³ They call for a universal basic income, which would both help with this situation, and actually act as an incentive for further automation because wages for the worst paid jobs would rise.⁸⁴ They seek to establish their view as a new common sense. They also argue that very many of the innovations made by the tech firms are actually based upon government investment, so that there is a legitimate interest in subjecting them to public control.⁸⁵

Although, given its date, their book obviously fails to take account of Corbyn's revival of the Labour Party and its subsequent electoral disaster, it does offer a vision of a socialist way forward.

Conclusion.

These articles have demonstrated that artificial intelligence is extremely important for the understanding of how society is going to develop over the next few decades. It shows that there are both serious threats, such as the potential for military uses, surveillance of whole populations, and electoral manipulation. But there is also a massive potential for moving society forwards in a socialist direction. If Labour can get to grips with what is involved it will be well placed to take advantage of the very poor showing that the government is making.

Endnotes

1 Adams, J. and Kletter, R., *Artificial Intelligence: Confronting the Revolution*, Endeavour Media, 2018; Bastani, A., *Fully Automated Luxury Communism: A Manifesto*, London: Verso, 2019; Dyer-Witherford, N., *Cyber-Proletariat: Global Labour in the Digital Vortex*, London: Pluto Press, 2015; Dyer-Witherford, N., Kjosien, A., Steinhoff, J., *Inhuman Power: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Capitalism*, London: Pluto Press, 2019; Ferguson, A. G., *The Rise of Big Data Policing: Surveillance, Race, and the Future of Law Enforcement*, New York University Press, 2017; Foer, F., *World without Mind: Why Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple Threaten our Future*, London: Vintage Digital Publishing, 2017; Fuchs, C., *Rereading Marx in the Age of Digital Capitalism*, London: Pluto Press, 2019; Kessler, S., *Gigged: the Gig Economy, the End of the Job, and the Future of Work*, New York: Random House Business, Second Edition, 2019; Russell, S., *Human Compatible: Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2019; Schwab, K. and Davis, N., *Shaping the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, World Economic Forum, 2018; Smith, B. L. and Browne, C. A., *Tools and Weapons: the Promise and Perils of the Digital Age*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2019; Srnicek, N. and Williams, A., *Inventing the Future: Post-capitalism and a World without Work*, London: Verso, 2016; Susskind, J., *Future Politics: Living Together in a World Transformed by Tech*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018; Tegmark, M., *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2018; Yonck, R., *Heart of the Machine: Our Future in a World of Artificial Emotional Intelligence*, New York: Arcade Publishing, 2020.; Zuboff, S., *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: the Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, London: Profile Books, 2019.

2 2019, location 114.

3 Smith and Browne, 2019, location 2009.

4 Zuboff, 2019, location 919.

5 2019, location 69.

6 Zuboff, 2019, location 1784.

7 *ibid.*, Location 2291.

8 *ibid.*, Location 4403.

9 Smith and Browne, location 250.

10 see, for example, Tegmark, 2018.

11 Schwab and Davis, 2018, have numerous further examples of potentially beneficial applications of artificial intelligence.

12 2019, location 1001.

13 For a more detailed analysis, with onward references see Tegmark, 2018, p. 119.

14 Zuboff, 2019, location 6945.

15 Smith and Browne, 2019, location 3548.

16 2019, p. 9.

17 *ibid.*, p. 89.

18 *ibid.*, p. 106.

19 *ibid.*, p. 159.

20 *ibid.*, p. 189.

21 Dyer Witherford, 2015, location 2105.

22 *ibid.*, Location 2433.

23 *ibid.*, Location 3065.

24 Russell, 2019, p. 74.

25 *ibid.*, p. 67.

26 see, amongst others, Dyer Witherford 2015, location, 3570, Bastani, 2019, location 1200, Russell, 2019, pp. 118-9, Tegmark, 2018, pp. 101, 122.

27 Russell, 2019, p. 118; Fuchs, 2019, location 1712 points to something similar in Germany.

28 2018, p. 319.

29 Fuchs, 2019, location 1777.

30 Yonck, 2020, location 2229.

31 *ibid.*, Location 2246.

32 *ibid.*, Location 2281.

33 2018, p. 115.

34 Yonck, location 2429.

35 *ibid.*, Location 2826.

36 *ibid.*, Location 2500.

37 Zuboff, 2019, location 4503.

38 *ibid.*, Location 6043.

39 Ferguson, 2017, location 221.

40 *ibid.*, location 78.

41 *ibid.*, Location 420.

42 *ibid.*, Location 561.

43 *ibid.*, Location 157.

44 *ibid.*, Location 993.

45 *ibid.*, Location 2479.

46 cf. Srnicek and Williams, 2016, location 1990.

47 Ferguson, 2017, location 1110.

48 *ibid.*, location 1167.

49 *ibid.*, location 2014.

50 *ibid.*, location 2221.

51 *ibid.*, Location 2182.

52 *ibid.*, location 3069.

53 Tegmark, 2018, p. 104.

54 Susskind, 2018, p. 45.

55 *ibid.* p. 130.

56 *ibid.*, p. 150.

57 *ibid.*, p. 228.

58 *ibid.*, p. 229.

59 *ibid.*, pp. 230-3.

60 Foer, 2017, pp. 6, 149.

61 *ibid.*, p. 217.

62 *ibid.*, p. 75.

63 *ibid.*, p. 354.

64 *ibid.*, p. 154.

65 *ibid.*, pp. 195-7.

66 Bastani, 2019, location 315.

67 *ibid.*, location 329.

68 *ibid.*, location 344.

69 *ibid.*, locations 523-8.

70 *ibid.*, location 757.

71 *ibid.*, location 775.

72 Russell, 2019, p. 101.

73 Fuchs, 2019, location is 636, 781.

74 Bastani, 2019, location 1042.

75 *ibid.*, location 2305.

76 *ibid.*, location 2815.

77 *ibid.*, location 3178.

78 Srnicek and Williams, 2016, location 227.

79 *ibid.*, location 403.

80 *ibid.*, location 1512.

81 *ibid.*, location 1579.

82 *ibid.*, location 2083.

83 *ibid.*, location 2182.

84 *ibid.*, location 2387.

85 *ibid.*, location 2866.

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