

THE FALL OF NEOLIBERALISM

(1) Introduction

Seen in historical context, Western societies such as the UK are exceptional. There is a very high degree of cultural diversity, with religious, ethnic, and sexual minorities all openly forming part of society. There is a low level of loyalty and trust towards political leaders and political institutions. Although economic inequality is extreme, there is very little shared belief in any attempted justification for it.

However, despite all this, society holds together, and in most Western societies there is little organised violent conflict. Nor is there currently any really powerful challenge to the status quo. Those who challenge society as it is are located in a range of minority groupings: Greens, Marxists, religious groups of various sorts, various types of populism. Despite widespread dissatisfaction, for example with austerity policies and the apparent lack of authenticity amongst politicians, there is still no strong ideological adversary, for example of the sort that Communist Parties used to provide.

What holds our societies together? Principally, along with the absence of an attractive and powerful alternative way of organising things, they are held together by economic transactions, organised through the capitalist market. Society is divided culturally but it is held together economically and financially. In that sense, it works.

Within this context of social cohesion provided by market transactions rather than by political, cultural, or religious agreement or belief, we can however see that there is one political ideology above all which currently stands out as dominant. Belief in it is not what holds society together, but it is nevertheless currently a more powerful set of ideas than any other. It guides government policies, sets the agenda for the mainstream media, and it meshes in very well with the dominance of financial transactions.

This is the ideology of **Neoliberalism**, the subject of this pamphlet. Sometimes this interlocking set of ideas is talked about as though it is all-powerful and, with the decline of both social-democratic and Marxist ideas, effectively no longer open to challenge. I take a different view. Neoliberalism has very important limitations and weaknesses, and it is essential to understand these if we are to find out where the opportunities are for making social change.

Scope for change has not disappeared, but it now has to be discovered in different places from those where it previously existed, and it implies movement in a direction which cannot simply be summed up as “left” or “progressive”.

My interest is principally in the UK, partly because I live here and am naturally concerned with what these issues mean for UK politics, and also because Neoliberalism as a set of ideas derives to a large extent from thoughts which were developed by academics, think-tanks, and politicians in this country. My argument applies elsewhere too, but more to some countries than to others. Although Neoliberalism is now an important influence throughout the world, it is far stronger in the UK than it is, for example, in Germany or France.

In this pamphlet, I will focus mostly on the vulnerability and particular weaknesses of Neoliberalism in practice, and what these imply for the scope for social change.

(2) The weakness of Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is the currently dominant ideology. It is stronger within the Conservative Party than anything that could reasonably be described as “Conservatism”, and in fact in many ways is profoundly anti-conservative. Although the Liberal Democrats are now moving away from Neoliberalism, it is influential within their thinking too, and helped to shape their contribution to the 2010-15 Coalition. In the Labour Leadership contest, aspects of Neoliberalism have been key issues in the battle for the future of the party, and clearly it has been an enormous influence within the Right and Centre of Labour, especially in its thinking about economic policy.

By “Neoliberalism” I mean a set of ideas which gives an extremely high priority to the operation of market forces, seeing the market as providing the principal answer for almost every question in politics, economics, environment, and society. It links philosophically back to a view of human life which prioritises “the individual”, and forwards in practice to a series of government policies, associated particularly with Reagan and Thatcher, but which have been continued and taken further since their periods in office. Neoliberalism has coherence not only as a set of ideas but also as a deliberate political project.

The weaknesses of Neoliberalism derive mainly from its stubborn unwillingness to correct its own errors. It generates what economists describe as “external costs”, and then generally fails to correct or eliminate these, leading to severe instability for the economic system as a whole.

It does this in four main ways, which I will discuss later. However it is useful at the outset to see the overall pattern. The main areas of limitation and weakness in Neoliberalism are as follows.

- (1) Its reliance on the market leaves it vulnerable to externalities, such as the costs it imposes on the climate, ecosystems, and finance.
- (2) Its emphasis on labour and capital mobility, cultural pluralism, and economic inequality clashes with the loyalty most people feel towards different forms of “social capital”.
- (3) Its standing back from proactive government intervention leaves it failing to engage with the potential of various new technological developments.
- (4) Its relatively weak ideological hold leaves it vulnerable to any failure to deliver to people higher material living standards and ‘economic success’. It is therefore particularly resistant to any challenge to the prioritisation of economic growth.

The significant scope for social change in the near future derives mainly from these weaknesses in the current governing ideology.

It is ironic that the initial Conservative attack on Corbyn’s election as Labour Leader was to allege that he posed a threat to economic and national security, when insecurity in global finance, the

global climate, and individual employment and work patterns are major characteristics of the Neoliberal policies Conservative politicians themselves promote.

There appears to be currently little evidence that we are approaching the end of capitalism, but good reasons for believing that its neoliberal phase will not last and that a new form of capitalism will take its place. The reforms necessary to bring this about might be described as representing a “renewal of social democracy” – a point I will return to later.

I want to emphasise that I am not arguing that such a new form of capitalism would provide us with the best type of society possible. In that sense, it is right to view the practical changes I outline here as “not enough”. My argument is about what is feasible in the next 10 years or so, rather than about what is ultimately desirable.

(3) Capitalism doesn't have to be Neoliberalism

Capitalism has historically taken a variety of different forms. Neoliberalism has simply helped to create one variety of capitalism: capitalism has the capacity to move beyond it and take some other form.

A transition of this sort took place during the 1970s. Up to that point, since about 1945, the Western world (and to some extent some other parts of the world too) had lived with a form of capitalism known as the ‘Keynesian Welfare State’ (KWS). Although there was basically a market economy, there was a political consensus in favour of various forms of government intervention (e.g. regional policy), government ownership (e.g. nationalised railways), welfare benefits (e.g. unemployment benefit), employment and trade union rights, and universal public services (e.g. health services). A willingness to intervene in the economy led to low rates of unemployment, which in turn boosted the bargaining power of labour, with wage rises helping to maintain rising levels of consumption and production.

Neoliberalism emerged as an influential ideology out of a variety of problems with the KWS. Funding government spending through budget deficits proved dangerously inflationary when combined with the 1973 quadrupling of oil prices and the breakdown of the international system of fixed exchange rates. Some government-owned firms, geared towards routine forms of mass production, failed to be flexible enough to adapt to changes in technology and consumer demand. Trade union activism often appeared obstructive and damaging to the economy as a whole. There was a general mood of discontent with excessive bureaucracy and overcentralisation.

When Neoliberalism ‘came to the rescue’, it did so on the basis of the following key features: (i) a rejection of Keynesian demand management policies and the priority which Keynesianism had given to full employment; (ii) a desire to reduce the role, size and expenditure of the public sector; and (iii) a wish to expand the scope for market forces to operate, including internally within the remaining public sector and internationally in the global finance system.

Neoliberalism was not inevitable. It was only one of the options at the time. It is conceivable that the Left might have come up with a version of socialism or social democracy that met the needs of

the time and provided a way of fixing the problems with the Keynesian Welfare State. There was a particularly important debate about the fall of the KWS and the coming of the next, 'Post-Fordist', era in the magazine 'Marxism Today'. Various proposals were made and campaigned for, but the Right won the battle to determine what came next. In the UK, the decade of the 1970s ended with the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979.

This history should remind us, however, that "regimes" of capitalism do not last forever. The KWS came to an end, and the Neoliberal period will at some point come to an end too. This might be with the overthrow of capitalism as a whole, but the analysis I set out here implies that the change will not be quite so dramatic. It will be a change from one form of capitalism to another, probably towards a more sensible way of running things than Neoliberalism provides.

(4) Neoliberalism is not Liberalism

Marxists have never liked Liberalism. There have been many good reasons for this – primarily of course the way in which liberalism has functioned as a pro-capitalist ideology – but it has also led to a predisposition amongst Marxists to think the worst of it. When Neoliberalism came along, it was easy to view it as the inevitable outcome of the Liberal tradition, and to read back into that tradition the concepts and ideas of Neoliberalism.

However the history is not as simple as that. The Liberal tradition is very complex, the word "liberal" highly ambiguous. In the USA, "liberal" is usually applied to someone who believes in state intervention in order to create a less unequal society, someone who is left-of-centre in the US political system. In the UK, the New Liberals in the early part of the 20th Century were pioneers in the development of the welfare state, influencing the policies of the Lloyd George Government. They saw the provision of free state education, for example, as expanding liberty, even though at the same time it represented a major extension of the powers of government. There has also been in UK Liberalism a strain of radicalism which has advocated devolution and decentralisation, and viewed big corporations with as much suspicion as it has viewed the institutions of big government. Quaker, Methodist, and other influences on Liberalism have historically encouraged a commitment to peace and against consumerism. Liberalism's emphasis on liberty has been an important inspiration for progressive reforms such as the legalisation of male homosexuality and abortion.

None of this is Neoliberalism. The Liberal tradition has contained so much more. An account of the roots of Neoliberalism in the Liberal tradition should therefore be balanced by an attempt to retrieve other elements of liberalism, with the aim of drawing on them as resources for opposing Neoliberal ideas.

There is a very specific opportunity for this in the UK currently. A key reason why the Liberal Democrat party was able to enter into a coalition with the Conservatives, and sustain that for five years, was that the ground had already been prepared ideologically amongst the Liberal Democrats, in a development centred on the publication of 'The Orange Book', which included essays by some of those who became LibDem ministers in that Conservative-led government. They described their

position as “economic liberalism”, and then claimed a share of the credit for what they saw as the achievements of free market economics.

The Liberal Democrats’ disastrous 2015 general election defeat almost guarantees that they will now move away from Neoliberalism, although how far and how fast remains to be determined (and mainly depends on how they respond to Labour’s shift to the left).

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that there really is a connection between Neoliberalism and the Liberal tradition. The connection comes in the conception of “liberty” dominant within liberalism. This is, above all, the liberty of “the individual”. But “the individual” is a strange abstraction. Everyone is from birth (and even before it) constantly interacting, and bound together with, other people. We all depend on technologies, ideas, language, public services, manufactured goods, flows of food, money, and energy, which we have not ourselves created. We may also depend on friends, lovers, and family. Taking the argument further, we depend on the global environment, the climate, and the other species which play numerous roles in sustaining our lives. None of this is really captured by the notion of “the individual”.

We might say instead that the quality of being an individual is one important aspect of being a human being. But what Neoliberalism does is to take this out of context and promote it as though it is the only significant aspect of our humanity. And, going much further than that, it then presents economic transactions as being by far the most important way to serve the individual’s needs. This creates a chain from a particular conception of human beings to particular views about the market economy.

I now want to move on to consider the four main areas of limitation and weakness in the neoliberal version of capitalism, and what each of these implies for a period in which many governments are continuing to use Neoliberal ideology to guide their policies and actions.

(5) Neoliberalism undermines security & safety

One of the key concepts for understanding Neoliberalism is ‘external cost’. An ‘external cost’ is defined in economics as something which results from economic activity but is neither paid nor compensated for. A classic example is pollution: a factory produces goods, which it receives revenue from selling; at the same time, it pollutes air and water, which it pays nothing for, effectively pushing some of the costs of its production on to the local community and its environment. There can also be ‘external benefits’ whereby society benefits in a way it doesn’t pay for. Both of these, costs and benefits, are described as forms of ‘externality’.

External costs play a key role in Neoliberalism. In theory, it has a rule-of-thumb for devising policies to eliminate external costs: ‘polluter pays’, compensation is provided. The whole sub-discipline of Environmental Economics is based on this line of thought. However, in practice, most Neoliberals are happy to maintain external costs in existence on a very large scale, with no compensation or taxation to correct them.

Some of these external costs concern 'social capital', which raises some issues of its own (discussed in the next section). Three other categories of external cost are listed here.

(a) Financial instability. The financial crisis of 2008 was an example of colossal external costs. Each decision-maker in the finance system pursued their own interests, and in that sense generally behaved 'rationally'. The outcome, given weak regulation (which financial institutions and neoliberals had lobbied for), was a general crisis in the finance system, with severe consequences for the rest of the world economy. The penalties applied in response to this have been weak, on nothing like the scale implied by any theory of 'polluter pays'. Nor, despite some limited reforms, has there been any thorough redesign of the global finance system, and so there is no good reason why something like 2008 shouldn't happen all over again.

The implication of this is that Neoliberalism cannot provide financial stability and security. It has a tendency to undermine the rest of the economy, generally not sufficiently to bring the whole system down, but certainly enough to be a major source of nuisance and damage, for most businesses and households. Deregulated global finance is dysfunctional for the productive parts of the capitalist economy (it could fairly be described as 'anti-business').

(b) Climate crisis. The other massive dysfunctional economic sector is the fossil fuel industry: oil, coal, and gas. This is steadily bringing crisis and instability of a different sort, through disrupting the global climate system, which is already having awful and expensive consequences throughout much of the world.

Whilst some theoretically consistent neoliberals argue for the problem to be tackled through market-based mechanisms such as emissions trading systems, in practice the most neoliberal governments and political parties are those which are most opposed to intervention to restrain the fossil fuel sector, and some have even resorted to denial of climate science in order to maintain their political positions.

As with the re-regulation of finance, intervention by government is often argued to be 'anti-business'. In fact, most businesses obviously need both a stable financial environment and a stable global climate. In both respects, the rhetoric and ideas of Neoliberalism militate against running capitalism in a more sensible way.

(c) Undermining ecosystems. The free use of the air as a dumping ground for carbon pollution is simply the most urgent of the environmental external costs imposed by 'free market' capitalism. The environmental destruction currently taking place is not only a loss from the point of view of anyone who cares about the natural world, it also represents an undermining of many of the basic resources which the capitalist economy depends on in order to survive.

The classic example is overfishing. Each person who fishes – and each giant fishery business – behaves 'rationally', thinking that their own extraction of fish won't make much difference to overall stocks. But the consequence can be, and in some cases has been, catastrophic collapses. Similarly, the destruction of rainforests may seem to make sense hectare by hectare, but the overall consequence is a massive reduction in the capacity of the biosphere to absorb carbon and regulate the water cycle.

Again, although a programme of serious intervention can be presented as ‘anti-business’, ecosystems are the foundation of the whole economy and most businesses have a vested interest in seeing them maintained, even if they don’t want to pay for that themselves.

In each of the three ways I have just outlined, the current form of capitalism is showing itself to be under-regulated, an underregulation which has been encouraged and argued for by the proponents of Neoliberal ideology. In that respect, Neoliberalism represents a particularly extreme form of capitalism. However it is clear that this underregulation is against the interests of the capitalist system as a whole. But this is only one of four major areas of weakness.

(6) Neoliberalism versus “social capital”

Neoliberalism exacerbates tendencies already present within capitalism, but in other versions of capitalism these tendencies are to some extent counteracted, for example through state intervention or strong community or social norms.

However the problem with Neoliberalism goes a stage further than this. Neoliberalism is actively undermining the social base for any such counteracting mechanisms. By promoting on the one hand “the individual” and on the other the global market, it undermines all the social institutions and connections which stand in between, including the sense of national identity.

This causes ideological problems for parties of the Right. The British Conservative Party, for example, is divided between those who prioritise UK nationhood and those who are happy for UK firms and privatised industries to be taken over by overseas owners. Whilst some see the relaxation of Sunday trading laws as a threat to family and religion, others view it as simply another step in setting the market free.

The free market requires geographical mobility of labour, but past a certain point, that may undermine any sense of community or connectedness to place. The market has an implicit preference for cultural pluralism, because there is more money to be made from a ‘postmodern’ plurality of styles than from sticking to just one, and yet arguably that also reduces social cohesion and trust.

There are difficult issues here, and balances to be struck, for example between social cohesion and personal self-expression. Yet Neoliberalism is not in the business of striking balances: it is in the business of seeking to expand the scope of the market and the opportunities for profit-making. There is a massive social price to be paid for pushing that approach to extremes. It is a price equally alarming from socialist, green, and traditional conservative perspectives.

Traditional conservatives may not, however, be so aware of the scope for developing ‘new social capital’ through internet and social media connections. Debate has tended to polarise between advocates of ‘new’ and ‘old’ forms of ‘social capital’, when there is benefit in both new networking and old communities, and a need for an analysis and style of politics which puts the two together.

Of particular concern on the Left (but not for traditional conservatives) there is the Neoliberal undermining of “social capital” through increasing inequality. People bring very different levels and types of skill and knowledge into the labour market, with many jobs currently disappearing through technological change. It has been argued that we are on our way to a society in which there are two types of paid jobs – high-skilled creative or organisational jobs, and personal service jobs such as nursing and social work (which are hard to automate), plus a vast mass of unemployment. The social consequences of this would be disastrous, yet left to itself, this is what the free market will produce.

Inequality is also being created through the unequal ownership of assets. As the board game of Monopoly illustrates extremely well, it is much easier to make money if you already have property. Land, property, and capital are distributed very unequally, and this tends to lead – at least in the absence of corrective action by government or trade unions - to increasing inequality in incomes too.

Can a society like this hold together? As with the resources of nature, it is possible to take from the underpinnings of our lives a little bit of “social capital” and in effect turn it into money, and then a bit more – for a while. We can sell off bits of nationhood, bits of community, bits of family life, bits of shared cultural values. Yet a point comes at which this process is seen to come at a very high price. We are somewhere around that point in Britain now. Yet Neoliberalism ploughs on regardless – and will continue to do so until it is stopped.

(7) Neoliberalism stands back from technological possibilities

Advocates of the profit motive are keen to point out its role in stimulating technological development, and there is some truth in this. It is not entirely true, however, because much development has depended on state investment, for example through military, space, health service, university research, and transport infrastructure spending. At the same time, there is a tendency to resist new developments where considerable amounts of investment are already tied up in the old technologies – as for example at the moment with solar energy versus fossil fuels.

However even more significant here is the question of the impacts of new technologies once they are developed. There is a tendency to focus on the need for government intervention to regulate new technologies, such as for example currently in the fields of synthetic biology and genetic engineering. At the same time, there is another side to this, which is the capacity of society to make good use of what does get developed.

A discussion of the positive potential of areas of technology such as 3D printing, the internet of things, imaginative uses of algae and fungi, renewable energy, etc., is way beyond the scope of this pamphlet. All that I want to say about all that here is that Neoliberalism deliberately bars itself from making better (fairer, fuller, safer) use of new technologies - its advocates simply dogmatically want to leave everything to the market.

Within the market there is a strong tendency to wait: for example, electric vehicles cannot be sold successfully if there are very few charging points, yet the market will leave the provision of charging points until there is sufficient demand as a result of lots of electric vehicles having been sold. The

internet of things is likely to link some things but not other things if it comes under the control of competing corporations.

Again, there are balances to be struck here: regulations can hold back useful developments as well as promoting them, and can prevent harm or increase it. Technologies may turn out to have uses which community groups, creative individuals or profit-seeking firms discover but which politicians and civil servants wouldn't think of. All of this is complex: the problem is that Neoliberalism is far too simple. It has become a dogmatic ideology, limiting debate about responses to new technologies at a time when it particularly needs to be opened up.

(8) The growth imperative

This pamphlet started by remarking that current Western – and increasingly, many other – societies are not held together in the sort of way that most societies in history have been. They are not held together by religion or by faith in any ideology or leader or set of institutions, or a shared sense of identity. What holds them together is principally what they deliver economically, in terms of particular market transactions and the levels of consumption available to society as a whole.

This makes our societies vulnerable in a different way to those of the past. This is not vulnerability to religious conversion, ideological challenge, constitutional turmoil, or even military invasion. This is vulnerability to 'economic failure'.

However 'economic success', as currently conceived, may not last for very long. Environmental limits may put a stop to the form that economic growth currently takes (and perhaps put a stop to economic growth of any sort at all). The "secular stagnation" thesis – the argument that global growth is inexorably slowing down - is plausible, even though the timing is very uncertain.

At the same time, in their drive to keep the majority of the population reasonably contented, governments prioritise economic growth. That is now proving to be a risky approach, because in order to deliver, risks are being taken with the finance system (and in the UK also the housing market), and also with the climate and vital ecosystems. The more determinedly governments try to combat any tendencies towards secular stagnation in order to maintain 'economic success' and their own political legitimacy, the more they are liable to make some of the consequences of Neoliberalism even worse.

Their lack of other sources of legitimacy and loyalty means that governments have to place a very high degree of reliance on delivering economic growth (there are of course other reasons for this too, including the drive to maximise profits) . That makes sense for them in the short run, but it is storing up problems for the future and at some point could prove disastrous – as it is already beginning to be in the case of the climate.

(9) A new lease of life for social democracy?

This pamphlet has covered a lot of ground, perhaps not with as much detail or depth as some readers would have liked. What I have tried to do is just to outline an overall picture, looking at some key features of politics, economy, and environment and how I think they fit together.

Any adequate politics needs to combine a radical analysis, looking at fundamentals such as the dynamics of capitalism and earth system processes, with a realistic view about where the possibilities are at any particular place and time.

My basic conclusion is that, although capitalism is not about to disappear, the Neoliberal version of capitalism is much more vulnerable than it may appear to be. This is not primarily because of its critics but because of its own weaknesses. Neoliberalism has weaknesses which leave it vulnerable to being replaced at some point by a different way of regulating capitalism. None of these weaknesses seem to be essential features of capitalism as such - and in fact were for the most part not features of the form of capitalism which preceded Neoliberalism - and therefore they do not point to a rapid shift to a socialist or some other post-capitalist form of society. Capitalism has historically proved very adaptable, and it can adapt again.

This will not satisfy capitalism's critics, and it does not of course imply that the New Capitalism is going to be a better way of organising society than if the world opted, for example, for some form of green co-operative socialism. The shift away from Neoliberalism, but remaining within the boundaries of capitalism, will not be the last word in social change. This is not the end of history.

My focus here is on what is practical in the next 10 years or so, without making any claim that this is what is ultimately desirable. However it looks to me like this New Capitalism would in fact bring real benefits in comparison with the Neoliberal capitalism of today. It wouldn't be the overthrow of the capitalist system, but it may be the best we can manage at the moment.

What would it look like? The 'New Capitalism' is likely to be more regulated, organised, and cohesive than capitalism is at present – more like the capitalism of the Keynesian Welfare State, but with greater emphasis on global governance to safeguard the climate and other basic environmental resources (e.g. oceans and tropical forests), and much more serious controls over international finance and tax havens, whilst seeking to rebuild "social capital" and retain the neoliberal emphasis on small business enterprise. Some of the relevant themes are already evident from the agendas at Davos and debates in the United Nations, for example around the new Sustainable Development Goals.

The top priority in this shift beyond Neoliberalism would be to bring the two largest dysfunctional economic sectors – finance and fossil fuels – within some form of international control. This is a priority that should find wide support, ranging from radical anticapitalists to people running businesses that face risks of disruption from unstable global finance and a destabilising global climate.

Although the fall of Neoliberalism seems to be in sight, capitalism does not necessarily reform itself unaided, even when it is in its own interests to do so. This is because it is a weakly co-ordinated

system, with internal competition and rivalries. Other forces are needed to help push and inspire, in order to produce significant change.

What all this points to is a new form of social democracy. Traditionally a distinction is drawn between “socialism”, seen as a social system which would replace capitalism, and “social democracy”, which would incorporate aspects of socialist society within an overall capitalist framework – the National Health Service being a good example.

Social democracy has come to be seen as discredited because the political parties traditionally associated with it, such as Labour, have in recent decades had their policies shaped very much by Neoliberalism and have therefore lost their distinctiveness - whilst at the same time their more leftist supporters have generally stuck with an outdated analysis, a bureaucratic conception of social change, and a lack of engagement with the severe problems of economic growth and planetary limits.

The space for an updated social democracy has therefore become narrowed down within the old social-democratic parties. However it may now be returning – not necessarily within those traditional homes and parties, but for example through the SNP, Plaid Cymru, the Greens, and some Liberal Democrats, as well as through social movements and “single issue” campaigns.

(10) A feasible political project

I want to stress again that this combination of progressive forces within capitalism and a renewed social-democracy is not going to be sufficient to move beyond capitalism and establish a society of equity and sustainability. However it can move the world in that general direction and away from the disasters of Neoliberalism.

Changes in recent decades in the nature of the Labour Party and similar parties (particularly the influence of Neoliberalism within them), together with changes in the nature of capitalism (particularly the growing pressures it places on the global environment), imply that the feasible political project needed now cannot be brought about by any single party or movement. The different pieces that are needed are currently held in different parts of the political landscape.

- Concern about financial stability is a key priority for many in mainstream business, as well as Left economists.
- Concern about climate and ecosystem stability is crucial for greens and the natural science community.
- Concern about social cohesion is shared across the political spectrum, including by many supporters of UKIP, the Conservative Party, the churches, and the Blue Labour tendency in the Labour Party.
- Concern about economic inequality is traditionally a key priority for Labour and the trade unions, and is also a priority for feminist movements and the “poverty lobby”.

- Concern about technological potentials is widespread amongst futurists and tech communities mostly outside the political process.
- Concern about growth and quality of life is a key issue for greens and has also been highlighted by studies of 'wellbeing'.

It is easier said than done to bring all these streams together. It may be that they will influence each other only gradually, although with electoral alliances possibly accelerating the process at some stage. A lot is going to depend on how open and pluralist the Labour Party is prepared to be, and how much Jeremy Corbyn and those around him are willing to work with people in other parties. A lot will also depend on whether the green movement can maintain its distinctive focus on the ecological context, managing to learn from other schools of thought but not simply dissolving itself into some general vague leftism.

The outcome from all this will hopefully be a movement or connected set of movements which is able to home in on the weaknesses of Neoliberalism as they become increasingly apparent, and can then help to bring about and shape a process of transition to something much better. History can sometimes move fast.

Victor Anderson

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