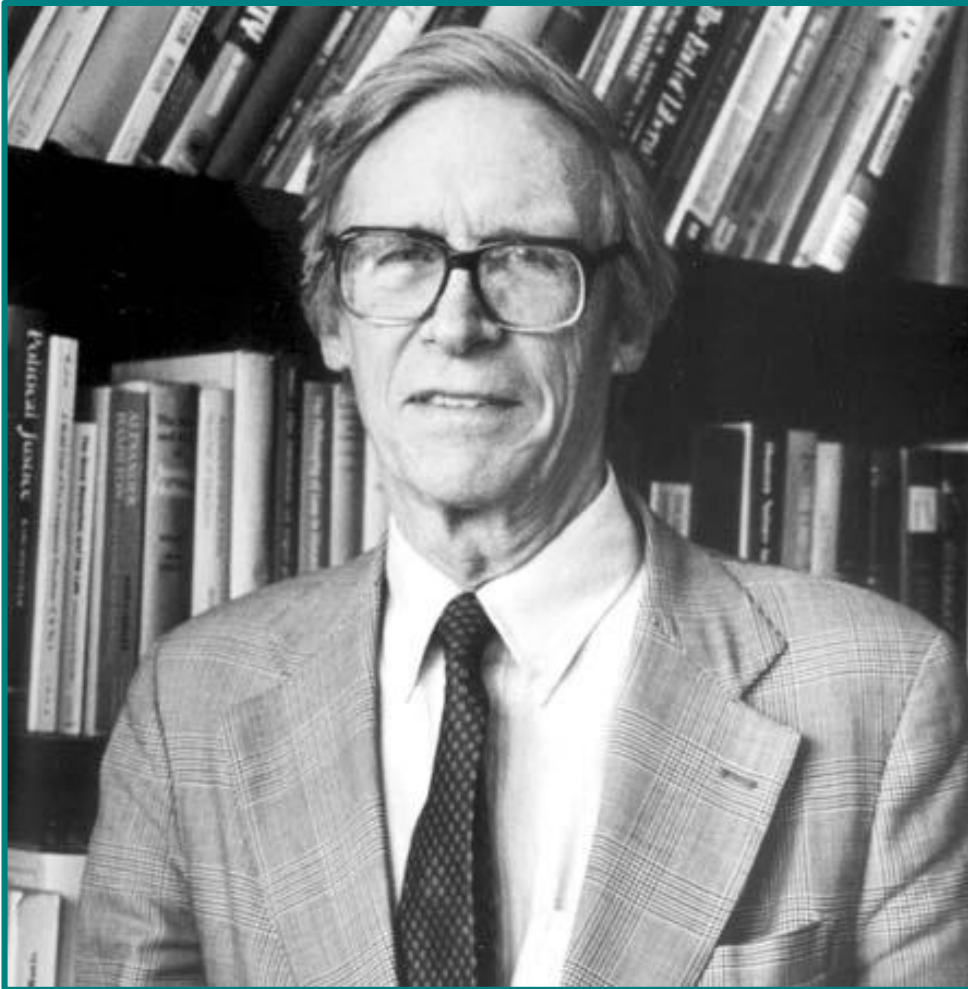


# *Warring Fictions*

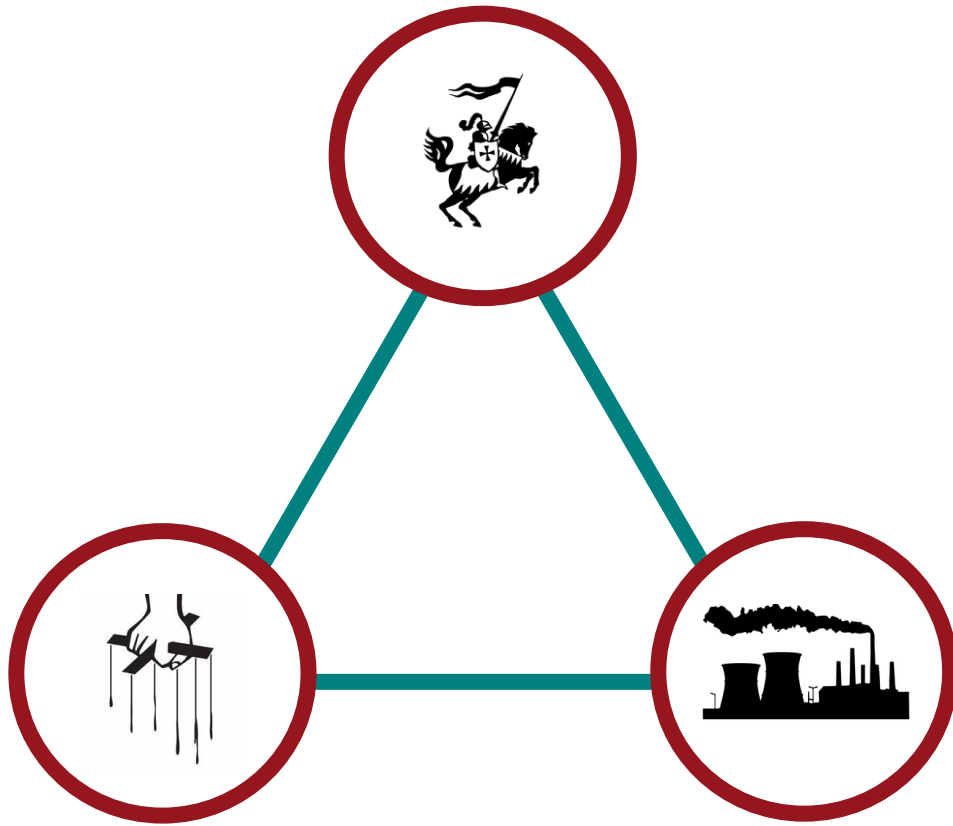
## Presentation slides

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Get 30% off the price of the book, by buying it on the Rowman & Littlefield International website, using the discount code **RLINEW19**



- ❖ What is a ‘castle on the hill’ which the left can all agree on?
- ❖ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 1971
- ❖ How would you design the world, if you didn’t know who you’d be born as?
- ❖ Justice as fairness:
  - Equal rights
  - Equal opportunities
  - Fair outcomes



- ❖ Three myths define left populism
  - The Dark Knight
  - The Puppet Master
  - The Golden Era
- ❖ These cloud our judgement and lead us down blind alleys
- ❖ They reinforce each other, creating a world view based on struggle and loss
- ❖ They stop us from achieving Equal rights, Equal opportunities and Fair outcomes





**ELECTIONS ARE ABOUT TAKING SIDES. LABOUR IS ON YOURS.**

I can never be friends with a Tory, says Labour MP Laura Pidcock



**RICHARD BURGON LABOUR MP**

*The Left in Latin America is showing that there is an alternative to the agenda of austerity, cuts, privatization and unemployment.*

**SPEAKING at Rally for Venezuela June 4**  
[bit.ly/RallyforVenezuela](http://bit.ly/RallyforVenezuela) #VenRally  
 venezuelasolidarity.co.uk



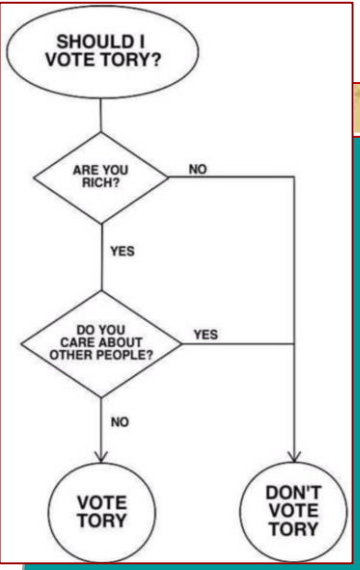
On Ukraine, I would not condone Russian behaviour or expansion. But it is not unprovoked, and the right of people to seek a federal structure or independence

**THE CENTRIS**  
 "The middle of two contradictory opinions is always the correct view"  
 in 1940

**EXTREME LEFT**  
 "We should gas zero Jews"

**EXTREME RIGHT**  
 "We should gas all Jews"

**"RATIONAL" CENTER**  
 "...We should gas half of the Jews"



# The Dark Knight

**Jamie Oliver**

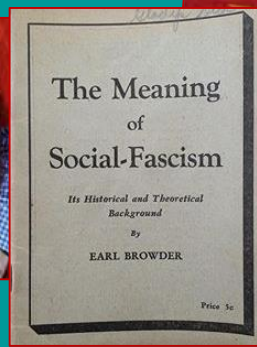
**PUNCHY JERK RICE**

JAMIE OLIVER RICE ROW  
 TV chef has launched jerk flavoured



Lol ppl are still confused, if you were born a white person in Britain, you automatically have #whiteprivilege Doesn't matter if your family's broke, you were still born with more power and opportunity than any POC. Soz if

**WHITE PRIVILEGE**



Replying to @davemadadd @Redbench123  
 Broad church where everybody actually believes in the religion 😊



The culture wars arrive in Britain  
 % who say they do not have a single friend who would consider voting Conservative (YouGov, 2016)



Centrism is the belief that in the great battle between good and evil, both sides make some valid points

Red Pepper @redpeppermag

*“If only I had met, on this search, a single clearly evil person.”*

Timothy Garton Ash

Four problems with The Dark Knight:

1. Individuals are complex and contradictory – we can never judge the whole by a part
2. People throughout society are products of life experience (including us)
3. No policy carries innate moral worth – to think otherwise leads to dogma
4. Personal morals and political values are not the same thing

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"Opinion polls are a device for influencing public opinion, not a device for measuring it.  
Crack that, and it all makes sense."  
Peter Hitchcock

% who believe "Intelligence services like MI5 have been working to undermine Corbyn" (YouGov, 2016)



**Lily Allen's Newsnight appearance cancelled after controversial Grenfell Tower fire claims**  
The singer has alleged that the death toll has been 'downplayed'



"Today's establishment is made up...of powerful groups that need to protect their position in a democracy in which almost the entire adult population has the right to vote. The establishment represents an attempt on behalf of these groups to 'manage' democracy, to make sure that it does not threaten their own interests." **Owen Jones**

**FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW**



"UKIP want to reach out to "the 52%". The Lib Dems want to reach out to "the 48%". Labour wants to reach out to "the 99%" who deserve better."  
**Richard Burgon MP**

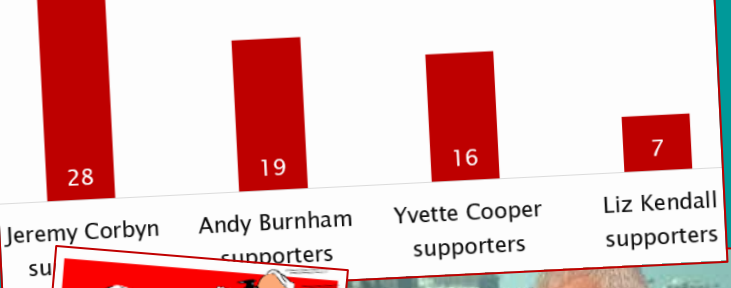


# The Puppet Master

the Canary



% who strongly agree that "The world is controlled by a secretive elite" (YouGov, 2015)

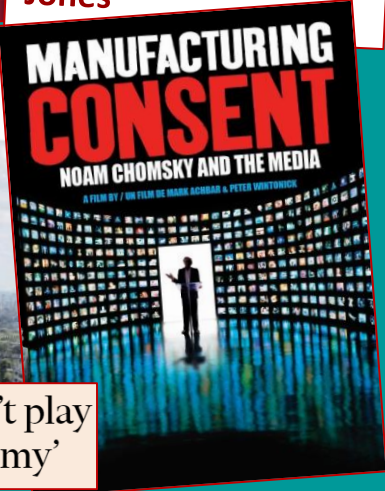


**Fury of Labour Remainers after Corbyn's attack on 'EU Frankenstein'**



Corbyn sets out stall: 'We won't play by their rules' in 'rigged economy'

Clive Lewis @labourlewis  
Burn neoliberalism, not people.



*“It was much better to imagine men in some smoky room, made mad and cynical by privilege and power, plotting over brandy. You had to cling to this sort of image.”*

Terry Pratchett

Four problems with The Puppet Master:

1. Few people possess the ‘inhuman, superhuman’ traits needed to control society for personal gain
2. There are self-evidently different electoral and policy priorities which ‘the powerful’ must juggle
3. The true problem with unregulated capitalism is that it’s organic/anarchic
4. By blaming ‘elites’ we shirk the hard questions of socialism

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"[The Attlee Government] was the only event of its kind in history which contributed almost nothing new or imaginative to the pool of ideas with which men seek to illuminate human nature and its environment." **New Statesman, 1954**

Labour MP, 26, demands end to '40 years of Thatcherism' in first speech attack



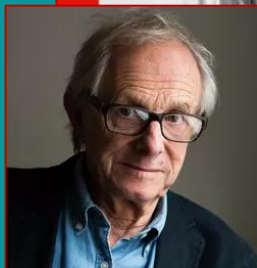
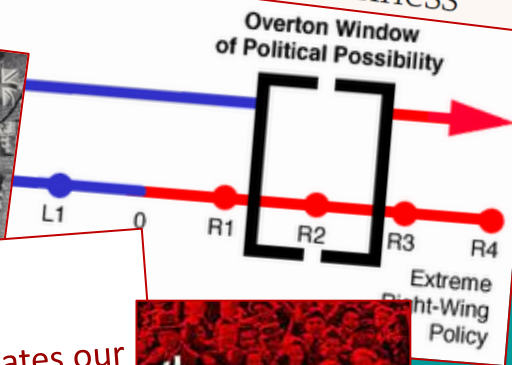
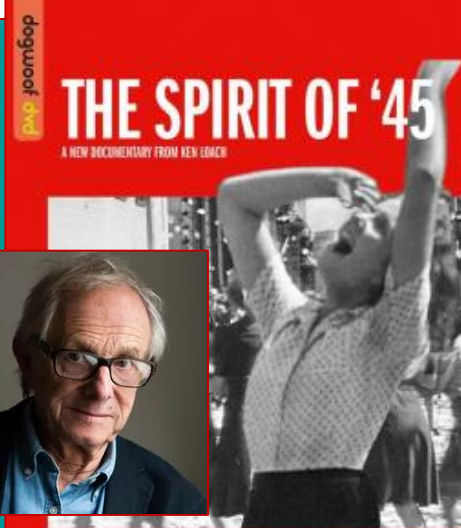
**Neoliberalism - the ideology at the root of all our problems**

Neoliberalism promised freedom - instead it delivers stifling control

Neoliberalism is creating loneliness. That's what's wrenching society apart

Neoliberalism: the deep story that lies beneath Donald Trump's triumph

Unchallenged by craven Labour, Britain slides towards ever more selfishness



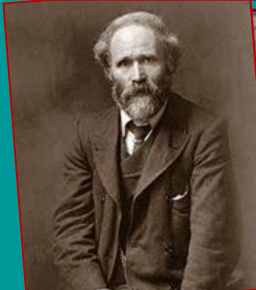
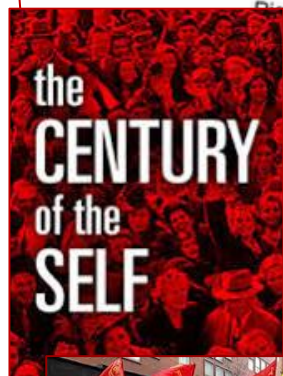
**Labour:**  
I prefer their early work

Memories and Reflections of The Labour Victory of 1945

Steven Pinker's book is a comfort blanket for the smug

# The Golden Era

"Our materialistic consumer culture relentlessly stimulates our desire. Our media ceaselessly engages our fear, our government triangulates and administers, ensuring there are no obstacles to the agendas of these slow-thighed beasts, slouching towards Bethlehem." **Russell Brand**



"It well recalls the triumphs past It gives the hope of peace at last." **The Red Flag**



**Bernie Supporters Should Vote Trump Because Hillary Will Reinforce Dynastic Globalism**





*“Time travel is a  
discretionary art: a pleasure  
trip for some and a horror  
story for others.”*

Zadie Smith

Seven alternatives to the Golden Era:

1. Isolation to Interconnectedness
2. Local, National, Global scale
3. Attlee, Thatcher, Blair, Brexit
4. Equal rights, Equal opportunities,  
Fair outcomes
5. Direct challenges to Indirect  
challenges
6. Groupish, Individualist, Post-  
materialist
7. Innocence to Awareness

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What do the myths share? Why must we take them on?

- ❖ A lack of constructive solutions
- ❖ A purity of purpose
- ❖ A sense of valiant struggle
- ❖ The mirage of a utopia we can never reach
- ❖ Excuses for failure and opposition
- ❖ What if we win?





*My Dearest Aneurin*

*I have received a great deal of criticism of the passage in your speech in which you describe the Conservatives as vermin... It was, I think singularly ill-timed. It had been agreed that we wished to give the new scheme as good a send-off as possible and, to this end, a non-polemical broadcast... These unfortunate remarks enable the doctors to stage a comeback and have given the general public the impression that there was more to their case than they had supposed. This is, I think, a great pity because without doing any good, it has drawn attention away from the excellent work you have done on the Health Bill...*

*Yours Ever  
Clem.*

## How can we challenge the myths?

- ❖ Take on all language which implies bad faith or omnipotent control
- ❖ Do not fall into using the myths – towards either right or left
- ❖ Reject the idea that the difference is about degrees of radicalism
- ❖ Stress the egalitarian possibilities of jettisoning the myths in favour of left pluralism

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# The alternative: Left pluralism

A democratic socialist politics which subscribes to the following analysis:

- ❖ We live in a democracy – this implies pluralism
- ❖ There are a range of respectable ideals people strive for
- ❖ Few policies are inherently moral, even if they are right at a given time
- ❖ Society's problems are not usually deliberately authored
- ❖ The power held by democratic governments, the media and business is finite
- ❖ Objectivity is more important than political faith in achieving our values
- ❖ There have been advances and setbacks, but there was no moment of 'original socialism' which was innately superior to today
- ❖ Cooperation with other countries is part of the modern world
- ❖ If we derive our passion solely from fighting an enemy, an elite or a looming dystopia then we stand for nothing
- ❖ Accepting the above makes us more likely, not less, to achieve progressive goals





# Left pluralism – the alternative to left populism (some quotes)

“The world is messy, there are ambiguities. People who do really good stuff have flaws. The people who you are fighting may love their kids – and even share certain things with you.” *Barack Obama*

“Identities are robustly plural, and the importance of one identity need not obliterate the importance of others.” *Amartya Sen*

“The true progressive giants [like Attlee] are radicals of the real – those who accept that democracy implies pluralism, and that a plural society is self-evidently made up of many people and kinds, only a few of them truly exploitative and criminal, most just pursuing their own version of the good life as tradition and conviction has offered it to them.” *Adam Gopnik, review of Attlee biography, NY Times*

“The idea of New Labour was not to be a good opposition party, to protest loudly or have an ‘influence’ over events, but, rather, to take and hold on to the levers of power. New Labour sought political hegemony: winning power and locking out the Tories to ensure that the 21st century was a Labour century with Labour values in contrast to a Tory-dominated 20th century.” *Peter Hyman, former Tony Blair aide*

“We are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us.” *Jo Cox MP*

“The language of priorities is the religion of socialism.” *Nye Bevan*

# Left pluralism – the alternative to left populism (some quotes cont.)

In the future Labour should place “greater emphasis on private life, on freedom and dissent, on culture, beauty, leisure and even frivolity.” *Tony Crosland*

“My most vivid impression in all these months at No.10 was the falsity of the illusion harboured by journalists, academics and others that something called ‘power’ resides in the hands of a Prime Minister. The picture drawn, or imagined, is of a great man, sitting down in his office, pulling great levers... Nothing could be further from the truth.” *Douglas Jay, advisor to Clement Attlee*

“It is telling the truth that makes us socialists rather than populists.” *Bridget Phillipson MP*

“I am not a relativist; I do not say ‘I like my coffee with milk and you like it without; I am in favour of kindness and you prefer concentration camps’... But I do believe that there is a plurality of values which men can and do seek, and that these values differ... If a man pursues one of these values, I, who do not, am able to understand why he pursues it... Hence the possibility of human understanding.” *Isaiah Berlin*

“If they are to revive their fortunes, mainstream politicians [must] persuade voters of something...fundamental: that life today is not as bad as millions of voters feel, and that the future is not as bleak as they fear.” *Peter Kellner*