

## WHAT DO I FEAR?

It is late June 2018. It is very hot, reminding me of 1976. That was three years before Thatcher. Tory-minded people will tell you of a time of over-mighty unions and inflation. They will not tell you about the increase of inflation under Thatcher; of her more than trebling unemployment, despite many changes to the way that government counted people who were out of work so that the figures looked lower; of her destruction of industries and the communities that went with them; of her celebration of greed; of her council house vandalism; they won't tell you of her waste of North Sea Oil revenue that could have been used to benefit society (she told us there was no such thing as society); and they won't tell you that she squeezed out the remaining, often irritatingly patronising, charitable instincts within the Conservative Party that had for years maintained the post-war political consensus. There is now hardly any evidence that it ever existed. As you will have guessed, I am struggling to keep this list short and have, for example, left out the disaster of privatisation.

**Today my fears are connected, leading to one very big fear.**

1. I fear Brexit because, not only do I believe that harm shall come to society's foundations in terms of jobs and health and welfare, but it will narrow the national mind.
2. I fear the Blairites within the Labour Party who are doing everything they can to destroy Corbyn. This, especially, includes a totally false racist accusation arising from his support for Semitic people who are indigenous to Palestine. There is no such thing as a single Jewish race and the word Semitic applies to a family of languages. Deliberately misusing the word in order to make criticism of Israel appear to be racist is nothing but a disgrace.
3. I fear our loss of a humane discourse in politics. Tony Blair could have changed this in 1997 when so many of us voted to be shut of Thatcherism. He was Thatcher on steroids with a sprinkling of socialism in the form of a few palliative initiatives such as Sure Start. I do not know what a perfect politician looks like and Corbyn certainly ain't perfect. He has, however, begun to resuscitate the values inside words such as 'fairness'.
4. I fear the narrow inadequacy of our mass media. Much of it is owned by people whose patriotism does not extend to the paying of taxes. As for the BBC, its commitment to balanced reporting would, these days, ensure that any negative criticism of Hitler be balanced by reference to his love of dogs.
5. I fear a system of education dedicated to measuring, measuring, measuring on the basis that if all learners and their co-learners

(teachers) are not simultaneously at the top of the league punishment will be handed out in the form of negative labels to be worn for life.

6. I fear a government that fails to prosecute war criminals, especially when they are former prime ministers and cabinet members. Only the lowly take the blame.
7. I fear a government that defines resistance as terrorism, especially when its support of torture, illegal regime change, land theft, displacement and the killing of innocents is presented to us as a 'War on Terror.'
8. I fear a contrived and intended widening gap between the gated bubbles of the rich and privileged and the unprotected poor and unprivileged. Do not be poor and unprivileged in Britain! We might remind the rich and the privileged that no matter how many guards you have a bubble is only a bubble.
9. I fear that we shall be taught to fear 'others': 'others' with different voices, cultures and skin: 'others' fleeing from disasters inflicted upon them by us: 'others' whose ancestors we exploited. In the words of Melania Trump, 'Me ne frego'. Yes, I do fear our inner Fascism.
10. And I fear that we are not alone. The fracking of society is not confined to the UK. It is global. The USA is not simply suffering from Trump. It is suffering from long-term institutionalised racism, genocide, land theft, human exploitation and broken words all, all smothered in the best quality rhetoric or, to make use of the greatest word ever contributed to the English language by the USA, BULLSHIT.

No I do not wish to leave the EU but I fear that for many years our contribution to that organisation has emphasised greed when it could have promoted equality and fairness. The treatment of Greece was not entirely an EU affair but it is to our shame that we stood alongside the nasty capitalists squeezing the final farthings from that country.

I wish to stay with the United Nations. It achieves so much in so many ways. Not every country enhances its sanctity but the USA has consistently prevented the UN from bringing rogue nations to account. So much potential: so much restraint and perversion by the USA and, shamefully, so much collusion with the USA by the UK.

My VERY BIG FEAR is that our major contribution to the people of the planet has not been cricket and has not been footy. It has been the rationalisation of greed and privilege. As innocent people suffer and as both the seas and the temperature rise higher and higher to what do we resort? We resort to cleverer and cleverer words and phrases to distract the attention of the voters.

Racism? Not a problem when you are white. Slavery? Call it by a different word. Inequality? It is in the Bible so must be OK. Exploitation? Ordained by God. Global Warming? Isn't it great?

My really, really, really, really big fear? I am a child of Beveridge and of Nye Bevan. Does that mean anything to anyone today? It was a time when we were financially skint but morally wealthy.

Does anyone care? My greatest fear is that too few do.

**Cliff Jones 28<sup>th</sup>. June 2018.**