

ORTHODOX

CONSERVATIVES



2021

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MANIFESTO

**MAKING THE CASE FOR SOCIAL CONSERVATISM
AS A SENSIBLE CHOICE FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE**

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INTRODUCTION

Luke Doherty (Chairman, Orthodox Conservatives)

The Orthodox Conservatives is an organisation committed to making a comprehensive and intelligent case for social conservatism as a sensible choice for ordinary people.

Thus, the purpose of this publication is to provide a coherent alternative to the intellectual narrative – or lack thereof – within the Conservative Party and to propose a pathway of policies that will present an electable model of social conservatism. Each of our contributors have translated our conservative convictions into workable policy suggestions that we would propose for immediate implementation. It is our aim that this document will steer the Conservative Party back to a sound political trajectory and initiate a wider conversation on how social conservatism can be put into practice.

Our organisation does not pretend to be the gatekeeper of what is meant by 'conservatism'. Instead, we simply propose a different brand of conservatism that has never been tried or presented to the electorate before.

It is not easy to define social conservatism because it is not simply a theory that can be read and applied like Marxism or capitalism. There is no one seminal text that must be studied and absorbed to grasp its meaning. Instead, social conservatism is an instinct that seeks to protect and conserve the good things we have inherited; which recognises that society functions best when its institutions work well together; and that appreciates there cannot be freedom without order.

We champion a conservatism that is tempered by a positive view of society – one that brings together and unites, rather than separating and dividing. We do not idealise a golden moment in the past, nor do we seek to drag Britain to a fixed moment in time. What we are interested in is removing the stigma that surrounds the principles of law and order; community and civility; marriage and the family; and beauty and tradition.

We are motivated by a firm conviction that the British people are a culturally conservative people and that they require an authentic and compelling presentation of social conservatism to be made to them. This will enable non-traditional Tory voters to discover their innate conservative identity. We do not pretend that this is an easy task. Yet the electoral success of the Conservative Party across the North of England, Wales, and the Midlands suggests that there is a political appetite for conservatism in Britain. We must be sure that there is a party that can deliver. It has become increasingly clear to us that the present Conservative Party is ideologically bankrupt; they have distanced themselves from any credible interpretation of conservatism; and have chosen to unilaterally embrace social liberalism. By adopting this progressive agenda, it is clear that the Conservative Party no longer reflects the political instincts of the British electorate or its traditional voter base. It is crucial that the party recognises this reality and works to amend it.

We recognize that many of the electorate perceive politics to be broken and vehemently believe that the government does not deliver for them - sensible people in ordinary circumstances. Many hoped that Boris Johnson's promise to 'level up' would solve this problem; yet this neat soundbite has proved to be largely devoid of any real substance. This has generated a large volume of comment from people who are willing to identify the symptoms but are unable to diagnose the problem or prescribe the cure. The reality is that postmodern social liberalism is not only corrupting our society, but is exacerbating its ruin. The current Establishment appear unabashed by this and continue to manage Britain's decline whilst limiting their own culpability. Therefore, it is essential that our ruling class be reconfigured and that the Conservative Party reconnects with its roots, reengaging with its own nominal ideology.

The Orthodox Conservatives are fast becoming the largest network for next generation social conservatives in Britain. We have a growing presence on university campuses and within local constituencies; and are eager to mobilise politically engaged individuals who seek an alternative to neoliberal and progressive politics. We are convinced that real change can be sought both at a grassroots level by focused activism, and at a parliamentary level by effective lobbying. Therefore, it is my personal hope that you will find within these pages ideas and principles that are worth fiercely debating and robustly defending. We hope that you will engage with these ideas constructively and intelligently so that, together, we can make the case for social conservatism, as a sensible choice for ordinary people.

FOREWORD

Ben Harris-Quinney (Chairman, The Bow Group)

A painting hangs in London's Wallace Collection by Poussin called "A Dance to the Music of Time".

It depicts four maidens dancing arm in arm in a circle named after the four seasons, and depicting the cyclical process of poverty, labour, wealth, decadence and debauchery, leading back again to poverty.

The painting contains an unusually overt number of lessons for art, but one is that history is not linear, but cyclical. The Romans celebrated Bacchalean orgies, two thousand years later the Victorians celebrated puritanism.

Whilst we have now completed the cycle again and live in an age of decadence and debauchery, the future will not continue in the same vein, and there are many signs that vein may well be breached within our lifetimes.

The left operate on the principle of progressivism, that every year that passes things will inevitably shift ever further to the left in an unending linear progression.

How often do we hear the current year argument "It's 2021! We must get with the times"... towards whatever the latest leftist pronouncements are.

As with Marxist theory positing the inevitability of global revolution, any halt to that process and notion of inevitability can be fatal to the entire ideology.

Brexit and Trump so disturbed the left because they placed doubt over the inevitability of everything and everyone moving ever to the left forever more.

For years the right have fallen for the left's argument of the inevitability of liberalism and said to the left, yes, but slower.

We need to say no, and faster.

Lord Lilley was Chairman of the Bow Group in 1975, and he recalled to the Bow Group being told in the early 1970s at a meeting at Conservative Party Headquarters that the task of Conservatives was to manage the inevitable rise of socialism. It was at that point he realised that unless he took radical action, the choices for the future were as bleak and simple as a slow or a quick death. He wrote the Bow Group's "Alternative Manifesto", worked to remove Ted Heath and flush the Conservative Party, and that work became the primary source for Margaret Thatcher's 1979 Conservative Manifesto.

If it is understood that there is no inevitable direction of politics, then there should never and can never be surrender on any issue.

Conservatism is fixed point. It is not an ideology adapting to circumstances in order to court power, it is a way of life based upon the lessons of human history. We know enough of human history to know that God, the natural family, and nationhood are eternal and immutable.

For conservatives the modern Conservative Party once again offers only the opportunity for a very slightly slower death than is offered elsewhere.

It is the guarantee of the destruction of faith, the natural family, and our nation.

Whilst the cyclical dance to the music of time is inevitable, so too are the pillars of great civilisation of faith, family, and nationhood always the same. Advancing towards the progressive agenda is not advancing to a brave new world, but towards civilisational collapse.

That cannot be what we offer, our only duty is to offer an alternative, and work towards it without compromise or surrender.

ECONOMICS

Post-Covid:

Many individuals are arguing that Covid has shown the state needs to play a bigger role in the economy and society.

They are making the same mistake as socialists made after the Second World War. It is true that the state might legitimately intervene in times of national emergency when there is one overriding aim – to defeat the enemy or in this case defeat the virus. But this is the exception rather than the rule. If anything, in the Covid emergency we found that civil society responded well without being directed by government and hospital managers succeeded when they had to make decisions on the spot and put bureaucracy aside.

Moving forward, the devastation of Covid and the huge government debt that has built up has made it even more imperative that we have policies that support rather than weaken families, promote rather than impede productivity and economic growth and policies which allow civil society to flourish rather than pursue policies which suppress it.

Tax Reform:

Even before the advent of Covid-19, the British economy had noticeable weakness and faced difficult headwinds. Average GDP growth per capita averaged just 1.1 percent a year in the 2010s, compared with 2.5 percent in the 1980s and 1.9 percent in the 1990s.

What growth there was rested largely on more hours being worked across the economy as a whole, with productivity growing at just 0.3 percent a year across the decade.

More importantly, average wages remain lower in real terms than they were before the financial crisis, and business investment has continued to disappoint. Indeed, the Office for National Statistics estimates that from 1995 to 2015, the UK had the lowest average business investment of any OECD nation.

It is vital that we should not take lacklustre growth as a given – as something to be put up with and adapted to without an ability to fundamentally affect. On the contrary: all nations have tools at their disposal that can increase economic growth.

Tax reform is one of the main levers that the government can pull in its quest to boost the economy in the long term. Improving a country's tax system can attract business and investment; encourage entrepreneurship and work; and can eliminate deadweight costs that hold back growth.

Overhauling the tax system is not a straightforward task. It is necessary to identify the parts of the tax system that merit the greatest attention. This means we need to decide which reforms will do the most to encourage growth.

Additionally, we need to coordinate and work out how tax reform can be implemented when significant cuts to the overall tax burden look increasingly unlikely, if not impossible.

Reform is necessary because inequality is measured by looking at household income.

If one member of a family earns no income, perhaps because they have caring responsibilities, and the other earns £1m a year, it makes no sense to regard the first member of the couple as being "poor". And all our social and policies and economic analysis recognizes. The individual without an income would not receive welfare benefits and, as noted, inequality is measured by looking at the incomes of households and not individuals.

Yet, when we levy taxes, we assume that people live as atomised individuals. Every individual receives their own tax allowance and tax rates are determined by individual incomes. This means that families which have an even split of incomes between the two members pay vastly less tax than single-earner families.

For example, if you take a family with an income of £300,000 per annum with one earner, they would pay no tax on £12,500 of income, 20% tax on £37,500 and 40% tax on £50,000. A family with exactly the same income split evenly between the two members would pay no tax on £25,000, and 20% tax on the remaining £75,000.

Given other complexities in the tax system on incomes over £100,000, the former family has to earn well over £20,000 extra in gross income to have the same net income as the dual-earner family. They are further discriminated against in the National Insurance child benefit systems.

Paradoxically, this means that our progressive tax system actually promotes inequality. Households with the same gross income will have different net incomes depending on how earnings are split between the members of the couple.

The system discriminates against couples with an uneven split of earnings for any reason - for example, because one commands lower wages in the labour market than the other, because one undertakes caring responsibilities and so on. When our tax system interacts with our welfare system, couples with children can be worse off if they are together.

Not all countries have tax systems that work on these lines. Germany and France, for example, effectively have levy tax on the basis of household income - thus treating two households with the same income the same regardless of the split of incomes between members of the household.

Such a change, whilst also replacing welfare benefits with tax allowances for children would help ensure that families, that first vehicle of social support, were not systematically weakened by the state. In the UK, we have a strong state and weak families. It is time to change this.

A pro-growth approach to tax policy

What does a pro-growth tax system look like? Fundamentally, there are three distinct ways to answer that question.

The first is to look at marginal tax rates. Lower marginal tax rates are better for economic growth than higher ones because they do less to discourage economic activity. They are also an important determinant of a country's tax competitiveness.

If marginal tax rates are too high in the UK compared to other developed economies, investment is likely to go elsewhere, and economic growth is likely to suffer. This will have a detrimental effect on society. After all, investment brings employment opportunities and with that, economic growth for households up and down the country. In turn, in addition to making our people more prosperous, this can aid their self-actualisation, as they would master new professional and personal skills in the workplace and develop a sense of responsibility for the products they produce or the services they offer.

Another way to approach pro-growth tax reform is to focus on neutrality—on the extent to which the tax system lets businesses and individuals make decisions based on their economic merits, rather than for fiscal reasons. Absolute neutrality might not be a practical objective: all taxes affect behaviour to some degree, and sometimes that is actually the point (as with an environmental tax designed to discourage pollution).

The third way of approaching pro-growth tax reform is by looking at the balance among different sources of revenue, as some taxes are much worse for growth than others. A pro-growth tax system would seek to maximise revenue from the least distortionary taxes, while minimising reliance on the most harmful ones. For example, widely cited research by the OECD suggests that corporate income taxes are the most damaging type of tax in terms of GDP per capita, followed by taxes on personal income.

Solving the issue of tax reform

- Individual income taxes

Taxes on individual income from wages and dividends should be reformed to minimise complexity and double taxation. Current individual taxes are embedded with high effective marginal tax rates due to the introduction and withdrawal of various reliefs that make it difficult for individuals who are moving up the earnings ladder to realise the benefits of higher wages.

- Property taxes

A property tax can be a simple and efficient way for a government to raise revenue. The UK, however, relies on property and transaction taxes, which distort markets and create double taxation. By shifting toward taxing the value of land and removing transaction taxes, the UK property tax system can move toward efficiency.

- Consumption taxes

The UK's Value-Added Tax [VAT] is a critical source of revenue, but it underperforms relative to VAT systems in other countries. The VAT has carved outs for large swathes of consumption; this

undercuts potential revenues and is an extremely inefficient way of addressing concerns about regressivity. Our VAT, however, might be an exception. That it is simultaneously one of the least damaging taxes—especially when coupled with the price elasticity of most retailers, coupled with a need to reduce the excesses of consumption for environmental reasons, broadening the VAT base would generate revenue to reform other parts of the tax system, without a necessary need to lower it.

- **Corporation tax**

Though the corporation tax rate is quite competitive among other developed countries, the UK has a corporate tax base that is ripe for reform. The UK should work to eliminate biases against investment, reinforce countercyclical policies, and evaluate targeted tax reliefs that can introduce a variety of distortions in behaviour and economic activity.

- **International tax rules**

The UK international tax system is broadly competitive given its territorial nature and the UK's broad network of tax treaties, the broadest among OECD countries. However, the government's approach on the Digital Services Tax (DST) runs counter to global cooperation on efforts to reform international tax rules. The UK risks being part of a harmful tax and trade war with the DST as part of its efforts to raise tax from foreign multinationals. Narrow policies are ripe for distortions and the DST introduces several by both selectively taxing certain business models and basing the tax on gross revenues rather than profits.

Regulation

Regulation is destroying economic initiative and civil society.

In one year recently, the Financial Conduct Authority brought in more words of regulation than there are in five King James Bibles.

Almost every problem in society is met by a call for more regulation - regulation to allow employees to work from home; regulation of food composition to fight obesity; the regulation of the content of streaming companies such as Netflix.

This approach of trying to perfect the world through detailed and extensive regulation is new in the UK. Ironically, it really dates from the Thatcher governments of the 1980s. Traditionally, the UK was a common law country with limited but effective primary legislation that was based on the right to life, liberty and property. If an area of life had to be subject to government interference, primary legislation would be debated and passed by parliament.

Then governments began to give ministers the power to write secondary legislation involving detailed regulatory rules which were simply laid before parliament. Then regulatory bodies such as Ofcom and the FCA were created whose main function was to write rules without any substantial accountability to parliament whatsoever.

There are consequences to this regulatory burden.

Labour market regulation lowers real wages and increases unemployment amongst low-productivity groups. It increases the costs of goods and services and reduces innovation and competition. But one can also ask whether the volume of regulation has increased so much that it has brought the very idea of regulation into disrepute.

How many people reading this actually think about the type of cookies they want when they visit a website and click "accept all"? How many readers read the reams of paper that is presented to us when we make an additional contribution to our pension plan?

There are other side effects too. Financial services firms look up to the regulator rather than down to the customer - they regard themselves as being accountable to the former and not the latter. The UK used to have many independent institutions that helped to regulate economic life from the bottom up, such as professions and stock exchanges. These exist, but they are effectively organizations that provide regulation for the state on a contracted-out basis and are themselves extensively regulated.

We have become risk averse, obsessed by process. People who work for businesses and charities spend time developing policies that nobody reads so that, if a problem arises, they can claim that they have discharged their responsibilities. In management, back covering is all.

Regulation is dehumanising, taking judgement out of professional life and replacing it with process. How do we deal with this?

It is difficult to return to a simple common-law system once we have departed from it. However, a good start would be to close down all the bodies that have been created to write rules over a five-year period (Ofcom, the FCA and so on) and replace them with new bodies whose remit is to bring enforcement actions against individuals and organizations that flout the law in their relevant field - but the law must be made in parliament.

An alternative would be to make regulation in certain sectors voluntary. Financial firms could choose whether or not to be regulated by the FCA, for example. If customers valued regulation so much they would choose FCA-regulated firms over other businesses.

Equalities Acts must also be repealed. They lead to HR departments gold-plating government regulation in fear of tribunal claims being brought. Except in extreme circumstances (such as racial discrimination), issues of equality, diversity and inclusion should be dealt with in the moral-cultural sphere. All the evidence suggests that, in the UK, this is an approach that works well.

Indeed, this is the approach that should be the hallmark of a Conservative government. The state is too big and the social and cultural sphere too small. The balance needs to be redressed.

Trade Policy:

Britain's trade policy is in crisis. Every year, Britain's trade deficit gets worse and worse. In the early-1980s, Britain ran roughly balanced trade. By the early-2000s, trade deficits of around 2% of GDP had appeared. In 2016, the country hit a grim milestone, recording a record-breaking trade deficit of over 5% per year – a number typically seen in failed developing nations, not major economic powers.

During this time, policymakers have focused obsessively on increasing their exports. They talk about making Britain 'more competitive'. But these are bromides. Policymakers cannot create innovation out of thin air. Their record speaks for itself: trying to boost exports sufficiently to close the trade deficit has failed completely.

Economists have tended to favour sterling depreciation. But sadly, this is not an option for Britain. What is left of British industry is now tied into a supply chain. Britain is not, for the most part, an independent producer. Rather it is a cog in the global supply chain machine. This means that depreciations do not work. When sterling falls, exports do not become cheaper because the imports required to make them rise in price.

Once again, the proof is in the results themselves. In 2016, when the trade deficit surpassed 5% of GDP, sterling was just over 27% lower than it was in 1980, when the trade account was in balance. Depreciation, the economists' weapon of choice, is blunt.

Trade policy needs to take a different tack. Thankfully, Brexit has opened several possibilities. The strongest of which is to undertake an aggressive program of import substitution. It is absurd that a country that can manufacture Rolls Royce jet engines does not make most of its own kitchen appliances. The challenge here is clearly economic, not engineering.

We advocate the creation of a sophisticated national investment bank, backed by the full faith and credit of the Bank of England, and modelled on the German KfW. The bank will be given a mandate to step in and subsidise investment in companies that seek to produce goods domestically that are currently produced abroad. If the bank identifies a promising industry that simply cannot compete with rivals on price, it will deploy rolling subsidies to subsidize the price of the domestically produced goods.

This will create high quality jobs domestically and will cut Britain's dependence on imports. We advocate giving the investment bank a national security focus too. They should identify goods that Britain, faced with a situation of global conflict, could not do without.

The second leg of our trade policy is to lessen Britain's dependence on foreign energy. Britain's oil and gas reserves are obviously limited, and no amount of policy ingenuity will change that. But we are currently in an absurd situation where Britain imports vast amounts of electricity from the French nuclear grid.

Britain is not constrained in its use of nuclear power. The British developed nuclear energy before the French did. Britain's first nuclear generators were built in 1946, while France's first reactor came online in 1962. Why is the country squandering its expertise and talent in this sector? We tell ourselves we are a nuclear power and debate investing billions in nuclear submarine technology, yet we import nuclear power from the French!

This is an absurdity generated out of ideology. Senior civil servants are slaves of ideologies imbibed during the Cold War. Many are still reminiscent of when they attended rallies against nuclear armament - many of which were funded by the Soviet Union to weaken this country. This is not only ridiculous, but also entirely unacceptable.

We commit to building nuclear power plants until Britain is completely independent of non-oil and gas foreign energy imports. Our new national investment bank will be tasked with financing and building these in the most efficient manner possible.

Monetary Policy

The Bank of England claims that it steers the economy. Its representatives tell us that they manipulate interest rates to cool the economy when it is too hot or heat it up when it is too cold. Most people accept this on faith. But is it true?

There are good reasons to suspect that it is not. The Bank tells us that interest rate policy works through its impact on private sector investment. When the interest rate is lowered, the Bank tells us, businessmen borrow and invest, hiring people and building factories; when the interest rate is raised, businessmen pull back.

The problem with this tidy story is that it is not true. In fact, there is no correlation between interest rates and the rate of investment. The Bank has never produced any solid evidence that their policy works in the way that it works. People take the story on trust because it is a nice story.

In fact, current central bank policy is enormously destructive. Manipulation of the interest may not steer economic activity, but it certainly steers financial markets. Financial markets function best

when they are focused on allocating capital. But many investors, instead of assessing the viability of various business projects, find themselves obsessing over what the Bank's governor is going to say next.

This ridiculous situation is in no way benign. Since the Bank started using interest rates to steer the economy in the early-1980s, financial markets have seen far more volatility and crises than they say before the Bank got into this game. This is not surprising. If financiers are more focused on Bank-watching than they are in investing, it is not surprising that they whip themselves into the occasional hysteria.

Who suffers worst of all? Anyone with savings – especially pensioners, a category we all aspire to someday. Financial chaos and ever lower interest rates push pensioners toward starvation. With our aging population, this will eventually result in a terminal crisis.

We believe that the central bank interest rate should be seen for what it is: a fair rate of interest with little risk attached offered to savers. Effectively, we view the interest rate as being exactly what we see accrue to our savings when we move them from our personal current account into our personal savings account.

The Bank of England's job should be to set the rate of interest at a fair rate for savers. What is this fair rate? We believe that it is simply the rate of annual growth of labour productivity plus the annual growth in CPI inflation. Setting the interest rate at this level roughly ensures that savers get an equal share of the growing economic pie from year to year.

We do not exclude that under exceptional circumstances the Bank of England might raise interest rates sharply to create a recession in a seriously inflationary situation – something that certainly is within their power – but we insist that a Charter be drawn up to ensure that this would be treated as an emergency and not become a permanent state of affairs.

The Bank of England was not created to control inflation or employment or anything else. It was set up to fund the British sovereign in times of war. Through its Open Market Operations and its capacity to set the interest rate on British government debt, the Bank effectively retains this power and we affirm it. We do not affirm, however, economists imposing their fantasy models of the economy on the rest of us via our savings accounts and pension plans. Let them undertake simple calculations of labour productivity growth and inflation growth and set the interest rate accordingly.

CIVILITY & ORDER

Public Order

Maintaining public order and keeping the streets safe from harm is a major aim for the government and specifically the Home Office. Whilst it is important to fight and secure our freedom, this comes to naught if we do not recognize that there can be no freedom without order. It is not fundamentally inappropriate for the government to encourage right behaviour and help maintain positive social norms.

In 1986, the Public Order Act was introduced to give police the powers to tackle and adequately respond to disruptive and high-profile riots such as in Southall and Brixton, giving them powers to arrest people who were disorderly or used threatening or abusive words or behaviour. Part 3 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill ("PCSC Bill"), currently being debated in the House of Lords, seeks to strengthen these police powers especially in the context of disruptive public protests.

Yet, there is a fine line between the suppression of harmful public expression and an individual being able to express their legitimate views and opinions in a tolerant society - including in the form of a protest. With the government's insistence on the free speech agenda written into the text of the Conservative manifesto and the Higher Education Bill, it is surprising that the PCSC Bill appears to be almost illiberal in relation to free speech, with wide-ranging and ambiguous wording that could, in practice, restrain legitimate free expression.

Reflecting the fact that an individual's right to protest is enshrined in human rights law, legislation has up to now permitted the police to only be able to impose restrictions on protests in limited, necessary and proportionate circumstances. This includes when protests amount to a breach of the peace or cause serious disruption to the life of the community.

The PCSC Bill, if passed today, would give police broad powers to impose conditions or arrest people if their expression causes "serious unease, alarm or distress", or even "inconvenience" to bystanders. With such broad, unclear, and uncertain terms, officers will themselves be granted extended discretionary authority to determine what is and what is not reasonable when they are notified of a 'protest'. Moreover, it will be for the Secretary of State to define in secondary legislation what constitutes such community 'unease'.

As with the use of sections 4 and 5 of the Public Order Act, the police have arrested many peaceful public expressions, such as the peaceful and non-threatening street preachers who have been investigated for "abusive" speech when they have read the Bible aloud in the streets.

The legal ambiguity that will be granted to police officers if the PCSC Bill passes without amendment adds to the ambiguity they face in investigating alleged so-called 'hate-crimes', and 'non-crime hate incidents'.

In practice, 'hate crime' is moving further away from a definition which criminalizes words which incite unto violence towards a definition based on policemen investigating people who have spoken or written words which merely offend another person.

As widely criticized in the media, the concept of police "having to check peoples' thinking", as shown by the case of Harry Miller, is becoming increasingly unpopular with citizens who think that law enforcers should focus time and resources responding to "actual" instead of thought crimes.

In a society where offence can be caused by people seeing historic statues in university colleges, reading gender critical views on private social media accounts, or seeing elderly ladies handing out "pro-life" leaflets, the task of the police is becoming increasingly difficult.

Many arrests and investigations can be argued to have crossed the line of curbing legitimate expression and speech. It is difficult for the police to be able to appropriately balance the established case law position that freedom of expression applies not only to "information" or "ideas" that are favourably received but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population, along with their duty to investigate crime.

This is exacerbated by the introduction of new legislation that gives more powers without providing clear and certain principles.

Free Speech:

Freedom of speech needs to be robustly defended: both by law and by the law enforcers. This is because the best way to increase tolerance and understanding in society is to facilitate the free, frank and robust exchange of ideas.

The suspension of a citizen's civil liberties while the police spend weeks or months investigating whether a hate crime or an 'inconvenient' protest has taken place is unacceptable in a liberal, pluralistic and democratic society.

Politicians have the opportunity to ensure that greater free speech provisions are incorporated into public order and hate speech guidance. The following points should be a priority:

1. Ambiguous words in the PCSC Bill need to be clarified and defined so that the police and law-enforcers are given firmer limits on permitting legitimate expression in the face of it causing "unease", "annoyance", and "offence";
2. Overarching free speech provisions need to be added to the PCSC Bill to align with the freedoms embedded into the common law and the Human Rights Act 1998;
3. Specific wording on protecting religious expression should be protected by the PCSC Bill;

4. A duty to train law enforcement officers, including the police, Crown Prosecution, and Judiciary on how to balance enforcement against fundamental rights should be embedded into the PCSC Bill;

5. The word "abusive" in section 5 of the Public Order Act should be reviewed and clarified so that only words and behaviour that are more than insulting can be considered "abusive";

6. Parliament should review 'non-crime hate incidents' and restrict the current freedom of the police to investigate hate crimes based solely on "offence".

Compassionate approach to the drug epidemic

One of the greatest challenges Britain faces in the disruption of our social fabric is the widespread problem of substance abuse. It is clear that there is not one strata of society that is unaffected by narcotics and the subsequent chain reaction of crime and deviance that presents itself thereafter: because addiction is a social issue that transcends class and ethnicity. However, there has to be a nuanced and compassionate conversation on how we approach the drug epidemic.

Firstly, it must begin with acknowledging an important distinction between different types of drugs and the culture that surrounds their use. This is crucial to understanding the different ways and means that drugs operate with different people in different settings.

Secondly, there must be broad recognition that some substance abuse is symptomatic of a wider public health crisis rather than one of a social order. This does not detract from the seriousness of addiction and the network of organized crime associated with it, but it does indicate that there are deeper and more complex reasons for drug abuse.

Lastly, there cannot be an effective policy on drugs if a one-size-fits-all attitude is taken. Therefore:

- It is imperative that there be complete criminalization of cannabis and a zero-tolerance approach taken. The psychological and behavioural impact of long-term cannabis use is hugely detrimental to the health and well-being of citizens,
- Public funded research into the damaging effects of cannabis must be prioritised as well as a large public health campaign on the dangers of its recreational use.
- There must be a radical and tough stance on the supply and demand of uncontrolled Class B drugs inclusive of 'Black Mamba' and others. This has to be accompanied by total criminalization and mandatory offers of rehabilitation.
- The possession and use of heroin and other Class A drugs should be partially decriminalised but highly controlled. Its administration will be confined to clean facilities where there is access to clean needles and other paraphernalia; and where support about addiction recovery is available.

- It will be an arrestable offense to deal and administer heroin and other Class A drugs on the street and in all public places. There should be zero-tolerance to failure to comply.

Channel Crisis

Over the past two years the Channel has faced a stark uptick in crossings from France and Belgium. The numbers in 2019 stood at around 1,000 over the course of the year, but by mid 2021, we began to see 1,000 coming each day. Naturally, this caused some consternation. Much has been said about this issue, but one question has never been comprehensively answered: why Britain?

We are often told Britain is a divided, unequal, declining country which is racist, hostile to incomers, and has terrible food. So why do so many thousands of people make the perilous journey every year in a desperate attempt to come here. The answer is not straightforward, and nor should it be. There are a series of pull factors which encourage people to come. There are historical and social reasons for why Britain is attractive, as opposed to say France, Germany, or Italy (countries these migrants will have passed through on their way to the UK). Primarily it is for our values, our charity, and the freedom which we have here. We are one of the least racist, most socially mobile, cohesive countries in the world. Mass immigration is changing that, however.

One question is 'why?' but just as important is 'how?' The process by which migrants make the journey from their home nations over the Mediterranean, through mainland Europe, and across the English Channel is fascinating. It is a silk road for criminal gangs, who make millions from the trafficking of people from East to West. This industry is propped up by the weakness of Western leaders, such as Merkel, who actively facilitate the influx of people by irregular routes into Europe. Likewise, the issue in the Channel is aided and abetted by weakness in Whitehall. Without Boris Johnson's complacency and complicity, the traffickers would not be able to make millions from their rubber dinghy rapids ride from Calais to Dover.

The money is not just being made in the Channel, but many of these migrants will end up working in criminal enterprises once they reach the UK, which helps a black market to thrive in Britain. Once these migrants reach Britain they often end up stuck in the labyrinthine asylum system, which all sides of the debate agree is bureaucratic, complex, overwrought, and not fit for purpose.

Reform is required to make this system more efficient, and with a backlog of over 150k applications, the average application takes up to seven years to process and in that time claimants cannot work or do a number of other things; they are in purgatory. As such they often turn to crime, and if not crime they end up working illegally in exploitative jobs. We are all familiar with the car washes staffed entirely by sullen looking foreigners with no grasp of English, clearly with no other options

available to them. Such operations are an open secret, and yet the government does little to break these up. They allow asylum seekers to work in these conditions and turn a blind eye to it. When the decision is car washes or crime, it is understandable that many turn to sex and drug trafficking. We need to stop creating fertile ground for criminal enterprise to flourish in.

An inefficient system is bad for those with valid claims, and good for those with invalid claims. Those who would work in underground criminal activities will not care about not being allowed to work; but honest people will do. Criminals will likely be rejected asylum, but if this takes seven years, they have seven years to live here and work out their next steps. Honest people are harmed by being kept in limbo, but criminals benefit from this stasis. After claims are rejected many just reapply under a new category, and the cycle resets. The vast majority of rejected asylum claimants are never returned to their country of origin or removed from the UK at all. As such this system attracts the worst elements, criminals and people who would not suffer from being kept in limbo for the better part of a decade; it does greatly harm people who do want to live honestly and do have genuine reasons for coming to the UK.

The issue is not as black and white as many make out. This is an extremely nuanced issue which requires careful handling in order to get to the heart of how this needs to be dealt with. The Home Office has floated a number of policies, all of which have been at once hard hearted and unworkable. They do nothing to please either side of the debate. Mean-spirited policy making is one thing if it works, but when it achieves nothing apart from bad press it has to be asked what the motivation is behind this. A theory with credence is that policy is being driven by misguided PR managers whose aim is to give the Home Secretary the reputation of being tough.

The system is broken, and until fixed there is one answer: we need to stop the influx. The problems it causes are myriad and severe. We cannot in good conscience allow this to continue. Real reform is required but we are doubtful we will see it from the present government unless they actually display, through workable and useful policy implementation, that they care enough to act.

NATIONHOOD & CULTURE

Although postmodern politics are drenched in 'culture war' discourse, the wrapper around what and who we are is not 'culture'. This concept has been heavily abused after the Second World War and the triumph of socio-economic liberalism in Western societies. Yet, for millennia, what we now commonly designate as 'culture' has been understood as 'faith'. The displacement of 'faith' towards 'culture' is a direct result of erroneous theology. In our current liberal setting, identities grow outward and inward following contradictory principles.

On the one hand, they are described as a matter of strict personal choices, drawing from an inaccurate understanding of 'rights' and of the human condition. Here, identities are restricted to a series of preferences which are supposed to reflect the 'true', 'autonomous' self of the individual, and which criticism — regardless of its degree of pertinence — is weaponized as an existential threat.

On the other hand, 'identities' are the matter of 'groups' in which individual agency is subsumed. Depending on the features associated with the different groups discussed, some 'identities' are arbitrarily perceived more positively than others; Englishness, for example, is famously branded as either non-existent or systematically harmful, depending on what suits the critic's interests best.

In that liberal context, the versatility of what 'identity' means and how it manifests itself exemplifies the profound misunderstanding that our society entertains with its own cultural fabric. Regrettably, for more than half a century, so-called conservative politicians have themselves directly participated in this degradation. As individual figures, they have stopped engaging with questions of beauty and arts, whether by feigned humility, genuine disinterest, or ignorance.

As policy makers, their financial support for the arts has run dry and, more worryingly, has been fundamentally misdirected. Today, a conservative government supports art with taxpayer money that not only disregards beauty as a core principle of the common good, but also expressly attacks the hand that feeds it.

The result of such miscalculation is two-fold. First, conservatives have fundamentally lost the hand regarding the importance of discussing a sense of belonging and shared humanity, something traditionally understood within Christian societies as a matter of eschatology.

Instead, attempts to recapture the discourse fall short into the hands of political adversaries, who have set the tone and canvas for discussing matters of 'culture'. Second, conservatives are sawing off the branch on which they're sitting by allowing public funds to fuel pseudo anti-establishment artists. Although they do not represent the whole of contemporary creation, many self-absorbed creators are pushing an unofficial political agenda that, under the pretext of addressing 'systemic' issues, targets exclusively conservative politics.

If conservative politicians want to take back control over the arts, they must shift the discourse around 'culture' at the most fundamental level:

1. Culture is not concealed into a fictional private sphere: it is a matter of faith and, as such, is it a living thing, which is shared and continuously shaped by all.
2. As faith, culture relies on a set of moral principles. All principles being unequal, cultural policy must derive from a positive choice and not be solely defined via negativa (as encouraged by liberalism).
3. Such moral principles should find their roots in Christianity.

A conservative cultural policy founded on Christian principles should be concerned with the following points:

1. Art must reconnect with Beauty.
2. Funding must be allocated on criteria primarily concerned with the intrinsic beauty of a piece and not the personal political ideals of the creator.
3. Artists must be encouraged to address their artistic legacies in ways that are positive and not merely deconstructivist.
4. Centres for artistic creation (whether those are universities, conservatoires, museums, etc.) must showcase the ways in which they positively promote British artistic heritage.
5. The CoE should receive more funding dedicated to the support of its artistic heritage (e.g. choir music) and the promotion of a new breadth of Christian art.
6. The Government should push for a new Arts and Crafts movement. Its support towards higher technical education should encompass a specific segment on skills and art (e.g. carpentry, glassmaking, metalwork), which valorizes an education sector in crisis and aims to change public opinion on technical training (e.g. Apprenticeship) at the same time that it champions the importance of art's value and function in everyday life.
7. Government must impose compulsory aesthetic standards on new housing at the national scale and incentivize local authorities to conserve consistent aesthetic norms vis-à-vis regional heritage. With regard to private housing, grants might be an interesting solution for households with a modest budget. For social housing, financial aids must be applied so as to incentivize architects to embrace specific aesthetic standards, as well as ecological-friendly materials and methods of building.
8. Encouraging patronage.
9. Setting a decentralized network of theatre houses.

The institution of the Monarchy

The preservation of public institutions is integral to the conservative instinct. Arguably the most important of these is the constitutional monarchy that we enjoy in Britain today. It is a significant reality that the threat of republicanism will become ever more conspicuous after the death of Her Majesty the Queen. We cannot underestimate the seismic impact the Queen's death will have on the fabric of our society; and as such, we must actively work to promote and defend the concept of monarchy and not just perpetuate the cult of personality around our present sovereign and her family.

Between the abdication crisis of the 1930s and the unhappy discourse surrounding Prince Harry's rejection of his country and royal duty, the institution of monarchy was perhaps most threatened by the cult-like hysteria born of the memory of the late Diana, Princess of Wales. Her immortalisation in the 'Kensington Palace Diana' sculpture by Ian Rank-Broadley was funded by public subscription. Far from being a piece of bad kitsch realism, its execution is in perfect tune with her legacy.

What was unveiled is testimony to a cross popular appeal to wokeness, masquerading as a narrative of sacrifice to humanity. See the neglected white boy sculpted behind her. Invisible from the front, and artfully cropped out of all publicity photos, he is left behind as working class boys often are in life, cursed for his race and gender, unfashionable as a cause, and failing in school.

Pluralism in the arts

Traditionally perceived to be both an apex and mirror of a given culture, the arts are often most adept at spotting that which leads to the downfall of a civilisation. Kipling espied the self-righteous pomp in his own time, and via his poetic genius and fame brought it before Victorian society; we need that same unavoidable perceptiveness to save our own from the virtue-signalling, pharisaic rot that is wokeness.

Esoused by a putatively liberal and predominantly metropolitan elite, and backed by LGBT, Green and Marxist lobbies, a dangerous woke populism has arisen from the old mantras of multiculturalism. To repurpose Byron, these are the intellectual eunuchs of our time. Who, like Eutropius daring to assume the character of the Roman magistracy, sheepishly mask their intellectual poverty with the chimera and cant of wokeness. Bent on the censorship, narrative mediation, and legislative control of the public, this ambition is cloaked with the guise of 'virtue,' like the Pharisees of old. Its type can be found in every age of humanity; yet rather than the doing of actual good, to which the majority aspire, it is the obsession with seeming to be good that counts.

To paraphrase the 3rd Marquis of Salisbury, the spirit of tyranny is usually dressed in the garments of an angel of light. And it is that seeming that makes the 'culture war' – as it is now called between the woke and what was the idiosyncratic, decent way of things – a war of visual and discursive representation.

The extremity of Leftist Ideology

The loss of the presumption of innocence, and the attempted reinstitution of racial pigeonholing make this a time to be very afraid. A divisive, gendered, and artificial ideology that fetishises skin-deep diversity while despising diversity of thought is creating social division where none has existed. This can only cause cultural disintegration.

Otherwise known as Intersectionality, a social science largely imported from the United States, no other demagogic utopianism has gripped the West so perniciously since the 1930s. Serious points of policy, such as the long-term effects of mass immigration on native cultures, at least in this country, can no longer be discussed without slurs of xenophobia and the attempted use of 'non-crime' hate speech laws based on 'perception' i.e. representation, rather than evidential reality. Lacking political wherewithal, the mainstream left laud footballers' homage to Marxism at Wembley, and the destruction of statues of the long dead who lived by laws long since changed.

Instead of providing constructive opposition in Parliament by putting forward proposals for addressing the national debt, crime, inflation and the handling of the international pandemic, a desire for 'mandatory diversity quotas' at art galleries remains the extent of Labour's legislative advocacy.

Equally, those on the right have for too long neglected cultural matters, leaving a void where once stood common sense, justice, and order, which evolved over centuries to form the basis of the nation's *modus operandi*.

Attack on film and culture

The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) has instigated a programme of reclassification under a woke aegis. Classic family films such as *Star Wars* and *Flash Gordon* are now considered 'too offensive' for new viewers, patronisingly deemed by the Board to suffer from 'heightened anxiety.'

The assumption that audiences are unable to discriminate between reality and representation is infantilising, sinister and absurd. Shakespeare's Globe theatre's latest page long 'trigger warning' to audiences that *Romeo and Juliet* do not actually die is a case in point. This ability, once taken for granted, is an innate and essential human characteristic, and is necessary for the effective functioning of any society, and its understanding of the world. Cultural censorship by the woke is indeed bridging the fascist.

The BBFC's programme is the inversion of the classic *Lady Chatterley's Lover* debacle. Banned for the depiction of cross-class infidelity feared for the adverse effects such exposure to the lower orders might have on servant-master relations, such measures - once derided by the left as draconian - are now being reinstated with wokery in the whip hand.

Assault on heritage

Like the National Trust, English Heritage has succumbed to the revisionist agenda. Trusted with large swathes of historic property, it is one of the charitable organisations that hold huge power over British historiography. These powers have innocuously extended to arbitrating the merits of past figures, often deemed 'national treasures,' with the administration of blue plaques on buildings associated with them or their work. Unfortunately, such information is now subject to woke revisionism by the charities. War heroes who fought the Nazis such as Arthur 'Bomber' Harris have had their names scourged.

FOREIGN POLICY

The challenges of the 21st century will be many, but Britain has all the potential to be a strong, independent and united nation, free from hostile encroachment and able to project her power across the globe. This can be achieved by a mix of martial prowess; technological superiority; economic strength and a clear understanding of our national destiny. Any foreign policy in which the UK is going to face down the many determined adversaries and global challenges that will be thrown at us in the next century must place these ideas at its core.

Peace Through Strength Initiative

Britain's foreign policy must be guided by a realistic appraisal of the environment we find ourselves in and an understanding of our capacities as a higher ranking military power and upper middle ranking economic one.

Therefore, we need to recognize that the international environment is no longer the domain of a single hegemon but is disintegrating into a world defined by competing global and regional powers, whose designated spheres of influence are clashing against one another, particularly in Eastern Europe and the South China Sea.

In a global system such as this, Britain requires a fully updated, mobile and powerful military to project power and safeguard our interests. The Johnson government has demonstrated their commitment with the latest Integrated Review to increase the capacity of the Armed Forces and this is something we support.

We agree with the extension of the nuclear arsenal to keep parity with other military powers. However, the UK should continue its policy of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to other states, and especially into the hands of violent non-state actors.

Our conventional forces must never be allowed to fall below the standard needed to defend our overseas territories. Since we do not know what events will arise across the world, we also need to maintain an effective expeditionary capacity in case British soldiers are required to deploy across the Global South.

The multi-linear nature of modern warfare means that the Ministry of Defence must be able to fight in proxy wars if needed. Therefore, the introduction of the newly christened "Rangers," whose job will be to act as small teams embedded on the ground to train local allied forces is something which we support.

At sea, Britain should aim to be a major naval power again. We should leverage our impressive engineering talent and long coastlines to recreate our past shipbuilding industry and become

Europe's naval hegemon. To do this, we should copy the examples of South Korea and Japan, who have managed to reach impressive feats with their naval industries.

This is especially important because our entire economy depends upon open sea lanes for the transport of energy and foodstuffs and supply shocks caused by disruption or blockade could have severe effects upon the health and wellbeing of the British public.

We, therefore, support the Johnson government's efforts to increase our naval capabilities; however, the deployment of the Queen Elizabeth to the Taiwanese Straits, or the deployment of British naval assets to the Black Sea is a misuse of resources. These vital assets should be brought back and deployed closer to home.

British naval capacity must focus on the northern European sphere, particularly the areas surrounding the Home Islands, and the High Arctic, which will enter a new age of competitions due to the thawing ice. London must also endeavour to ensure our other military capabilities are as modernized as possible, particularly in the field of AI, which other nations are integrating into their Armed Forces.

To reflect the importance of space to modern conflicts, RAF Space Command should eventually become a separate branch of the British military. The initial focus of Space Command should be on the question of how we defend British and allied satellites, which are vital for coordinating military action, international trade and movement.

Eventually, when space becomes a more crowded area, and with militarization a real possibility, SC will also research into aggressive actions which can be taken against potential opponent's space based assets, which do not violate current international treaties on the use of space.

The UK should ideally endeavor to develop our own GPS system to prevent being blocked out of the others or fed false information from foreign systems. However, considering the diversity of choice from allied states, this is a secondary priority.

A caveat on aggression & the 'Special Relationship'

Despite these steps, we strongly believe that Britain should not throw its military weight around in the world.

When Britain enters military action, it must be when our core interests and values are threatened, and not because of diplomatic pressure from international partners. This does not suggest that Britain is non-interventionist or does not have a role to play in humanitarian peacekeeping missions, but it is a significant principle that needs to be reasserted. Britain has joined America's imperial adventures for too long at the behest of our own national interests.

This is especially true in the new Biden administration. Biden has regularly treated Britain with disdain and his approach highlights the fact that the successive US administrations have not

considered British interests when they pursue their strategic objectives.

Britain should aim to better resemble Germany or Japan in this regard: two middle powers with whom we share similar positions in the global ranking of economies. Both countries work with the United States as allies but are able to exercise strategic distance when it suits them. Britain must do the same from now on.

While the UK can seek to refocus our military closer to home, London should become the main sponsor of Japanese and Eastern European military modernization, with these powers acting as buffers against the rising China and Russian regional powers. This would essentially allow us to create a ring of steel around Eurasia, with the UK playing the role of supplying arms and technology, while still remaining militarily noncommittal.

Non-Intervention in the affairs of others:

The desire to avoid unnecessary entanglements should also translate into a desire to avoid pretensions that we can dictate to other nations how they should govern themselves. Fundamentally as conservatives, we recognize that the notion of "universal values" often does not reflect the diversity of the world's peoples and civilizations across the world.

Every nation has the right to practice their traditions and govern their affairs as they see fit. This is provided that they do not aggress against our own nation, either openly or via subversion.

We recognize that democracy and liberalism only develop organically within societies over generations and cannot simply be forcibly implanted or superimposed on a country with no history or experience of this world view and political system.

The natural extension of this truth is that ending the doctrine of liberal interventionism and nation building - which we explicitly recognize has often led to global destabilization through unintended consequences - should be a top priority for the UK.

It is necessary for the Conservative Party and the British government to utterly reject the notion of liberal proletarianism if it wishes to prevent another foreign policy disaster like the War on Terror.

The interconnectedness of the modern world means that these unintended consequences produced in one area could, and often do, spill into dozens of others - potentially drawing in millions of innocents. With nuclear and biological weapons and the increased lethality and spread of non-state actors, this possibility becomes even more likely. This risk must be mitigated at all costs. This means that foreign policy is one of the areas where the socially conservative preference for the "imperfect now" over an idealized future can prevent catastrophe.

A new approach based on national interests and hard realism will prevent such disasters. In relation to foreign policy, the realist is the one who will lead the world to as close to peace as it will get,

whereas the idealist will charge head first into disaster.

Critics will argue that this means we will ignore the suffering of people languishing under tyrants or being brutalized by genocidal regimes. This is not true. The UK can still exercise considerable diplomatic and economic leverage, including sanctions and joining international boycotting alliances. It just means that we will be realistic about our inability to use military means to fight evil, and recognize that often the worst evil is produced more by naivety than intention.

Strategic Autonomy

Recent events have shown us that Britain has been made more vulnerable by our dependence on foreign production bases. MoD researchers have confirmed that we are likely to see higher numbers of "black swans" and threats to our supply chains.

This could be severe and disruptive weather conditions caused by a changing climate, international tensions or potential cyber attacks against international shipping infrastructure. It is in our interest to shorten supply chains for products which could cause severe economic and social harm if the UK cannot access them. This includes medicine, energy and staple food products.

Alongside this, a key goal of British grand strategy should be to develop our own strategic industries, with a particular focus on technology and science which will play a vital role in the future economy. We are fortunate to have an impressive research and engineering base in this country, alongside some of the best universities in the world.

We now have to use these assets to cultivate a "startup culture" where the government supports domestic innovations which have been identified as having key energy, military or other important applications. For inspiration, we could copy the example of Israel, whose military and industrial policy has been able to produce vast strides in technology with more limited resources than the British state can bring to bear.

To assist in enhancing our domestic skills supply, focus should be shifted to increasing the number of technical colleges where students are able to learn robotics, AI and other practical skills. This would be simultaneous with charging students dependent upon the usefulness of their degrees, with more practical degrees, such as engineering or medicine being cheaper for students. This would also have the added benefit of removing a large source of subversion from our society, and preventing young people from falling into debt for a worthless qualification.

Where Britain cannot produce technologies ourselves, we should ally with other nations whose interests align with us. Downing Street's proposed D10 alliance, which would combine the research capabilities of ten democracies to produce 5G technology outside of Beijing's reach, is the perfect example of what we should be doing.

Additionally, Britain must retain the influence of hostile states outside our critical infrastructure. This includes intervening to prevent the purchase of companies in certain sectors. We should do a full

audit starting tomorrow of the origin of companies with a controlling state in British national enterprises to be sure that our industry is not falling into hostile hands.

While we recognize the innovation and benefit of the free market in the consumer sector, real conservatives also realise that some things are more important than money. One of those things is national security and independence and the profit motive cannot be trusted to safeguard these ideals, therefore that duty must fall to the firm hand of the state. We should not be hesitant to use government power to halt foreign powers seizing controlling influence within sectors with military and vital civil applications.

Our willingness to exercise free trade while outside powers have been highly protectionist have led to us being taken advantage of. One only needs to look at the financial strategy of the Chinese, or the Russian "dirty money" which has flowed into our country to understand that the free market is only being adhered to by the West and is being used as a weapon of influence by our enemies.

Defense of Western civilization:

On the issue of influence, the modern world has allowed unparalleled abilities to impact the societies of opposing states. Modern communications technology and the internet have created a more interconnected world, in which "grey zone" and propaganda can be used to strike into the hearts of other societies. This also comes at a time when Western society is more divided along multiple cleavages, be they ethnic, religious or cultural, which our enemies are trying to exploit to undermine our political systems and ability to act as a unified force in the world.

There are a wide variety of states and groups doing this, including Russian "active measures," Chinese "unlimited warfare" and Saudi funded Wahhabism.

We have also seen recent attempts by Iran to encourage Scottish separatism. It also extends to other Western democracies, such as the US where America's racial problems have been weaponized by Chinese and Russian media, or to Germany where Turkey has attempted to inflame tensions in the large Turkish diaspora there.

The UK must take seriously the threat posed to our civilization by other powers trying to pry apart the bonds of our societies and doing so will require an effective counter-subversion strategy to prevent this poison from seeping into our cultural and political life.

Again, the use of state power is necessary here. Of course, other nations can engage in cross-cultural exchange with us but this comes with the implicit (and it should be made explicit) that they will not attempt to subvert us.

This means taking action such as shutting down the Chinese Confucius Institutes, who are nothing more than propagandists for the Chinese state, and safeguarding academic freedom from Chinese communist encroachment and intimidation within our institutions of higher education.

Tracing the source of money to mosques and madrasas and finding that it originates in the Gulf States should entail an immediate closure, and Russian dirty money should be rooted out of the City of London as forcibly as possible.

These are only some steps we can take to prevent malicious foreign influence within the UK. We can also use our resources to go on the offensive in our opponent's countries. Countries like Russia, China and Iran are equally fractured along various cleavages and we can also exploit these to attempt to weaken them.

Across much of the Global South, the BBC World Service has one of the highest audiences. We should be using it to expand our soft power. Other nations, such as Qatar with Al Jazeera or Russia with RT, don't hesitate to use their media influence to preach the values of their civilizations and win propaganda victories, and we should be doing the same.

This could come in tandem with our foreign aid policy. If we must be bound to the current figure of 0.7 for our foreign aid budget, then let us use it to defend the world's Christians and support regimes and groups who have a history of demonstrable loyalty to the UK, examples could include groups such as the Kurds, or countries like Nepal.

This policy will allow us to aid friendly peoples and allied states without making a hardened political commitment to involve ourselves in the geopolitics of other regions.

This comes with the caveat that anyone in receipt of British money should conform to certain preconditions, mainly they should support us in international organizations, give us favourable trade deals and agree not to fund or arm groups who could target British personnel abroad.

Countries which are hostile to us or have funded terrorist or criminal groups which harm our interests, Pakistan for instance, shouldn't receive a penny of British taxpayer money.

New Markets:

Britain's current project of seeking closer bilateral ties with a number of countries beyond Europe is going in the right direction.

The UK must recover her tradition as a trading nation and seek out new markets. But this cannot come with the cost of our sovereignty or our industrial autonomy. Fortunately, the Pacific rim nations represent a potential bounty of countries who have swelling populations of consumers, growing economies and are fiercely protective of their own national identities and political independence.

Britain's proposed entry into the CPTPP is the kind of trade deal which we should be aiming towards, and could serve as a blueprint for the types of deals we can do with South America and Africa, two continents endowed with plentiful natural resources and whose populations are growing in number and wealth.

FAMILY POLICY

The United Kingdom, like many developed nations in the world, is facing a demographic crisis. Such a rapid transformation in the state of the country will have significant consequences for the state of the country, both in economic and societal terms.

It is absolutely essential that we identify why the UK's fertility rate is so low so that we can seek the appropriate solutions. Many people are constrained by economic worries as well as cultural and social attitudes. As with other countries, notably Japan, the government is responsible for addressing this issue.

The Conservative Party has long promoted itself as the party of family values in the United Kingdom, and for many years it demonstrated this with its commitment to the family and its affirmation that the family was the most important benchmark in society.

At a time of increasing societal fragmentation, it is essential that a Conservative government initiate policies designed to strengthen families. All the evidence points to stronger families being a requirement if greater social mobility and reform is the desired outcome for all.

Stronger families are not just desired, they are essential. In economic terms, the price of family breakdown (as of 2016) has been estimated at £48 billion - roughly £1,820 per taxpayer. While this seems a remarkably high number, the true economic cost of failed families is likely to be much higher. The evidence is clear that those families that remain together and are stable and productive are likely to be wealth creators whilst fractured families are far more likely to be dependent on the state.

What we are demanding is not that the state interferes in family life, but that it helps support the traditional family and fosters an environment whereby parents and children can flourish. The United Kingdom suffers from many of modern society's ills, including drug abuse, suicide, cycles of crime and anti-social behaviour. The collapse and demonization of the family unit is responsible for a great number of these issues and preventing these problems can be achieved by giving the youth of tomorrow a stable, secure upbringing.

The gang culture that pervades cities and areas in the U.K. (notably London) can be associated with the lack of family structure amongst young men. Rather than the much utilized 'there aren't enough youth clubs available' argument that is regularly mooted, we should be analyzing the reasons why so many young men are attracted to these gangs and equally why these gangs find it so easy to target these young men. In 2017, two thirds of knife crime offenders under the age of 25 were BAME (Black and minority ethnic).

Poverty and a sense of desperation are key reasons why so many young men fall into a life of crime. But what is so often neglected is data around how many of these young men come from broken homes and families without a father there to influence and guide them. Indeed, the issue of fatherlessness is often swept aside by politicians and the media alike in favour of arguments surrounding police cuts, a lack of youth infrastructure and other factors.

This was acknowledged by assistant chief constable for Bedfordshire, Jackie Sebire, and in the same article Melanie Phillips noted that, "Surveys by the Centre for Social Justice have found that 75 per cent of British adults think more should be done to prevent families from breaking up, 82 percent think it's important for children to live with both parents". This provides evidence that the public in the UK would be receptive to a government that prioritized this type of action and which sought to alleviate the problems associated with the breakdown of the family unit.

As the UK spirals towards an ever-growing demographic crisis and an ageing population, more needs to be done to address this issue. It is vital, therefore, that sufficient research is undertaken to ensure that appropriate ways of resolving this issue are discussed. What this means is moving away from the currently unsustainable levels of migration that we are seeing in the UK and encouraging people in the country to have more children, rather than less. Importing huge numbers of people from abroad as an attempt at a short-term solution for a demographic imbalance is not only short-sighted but also problematic in the sense it will exacerbate the issue in the future.

The British government ought to emulate the French model which utilizes the Ministry of Families in helping to form social policy and matters concerning the family. It is responsible for policies affecting the family such as paternity and maternity leave and welfare policies and taxes directed at larger families. A British equivalent would demonstrate that the government is putting family welfare at the forefront of its social policy and ensure that family and child welfare is once more paramount to a conservative government, as should be the case.

Whilst the population in the world may be growing, the number of births in the UK is decreasing, and the population of the country is only growing itself due to high levels of migration from the EU and further afield. The need for young, working people to support an ageing population is imperative and our government should focus on the following policy initiatives in order to facilitate this:

Providing financial incentives to encourage families to have more children

The government should look at successful policies in other countries and how they have been implemented. As has been trialed in other parts of Europe, with notable achievements in the case of Hungary, financial incentives should be offered to couples in order to facilitate the creation of larger families.

Hungary's pro-family policy has been successful and encourages more children amongst the local population so as not to rely on foreign labour and mass-immigration, which could be harmful in terms of preserving Hungary's unique culture and characteristics.

With an ongoing demographic crisis in the U.K., the idea of having children is off-putting for many people, particularly those on a low income, because of the financial costs associated with it. These fears should be assuaged in the form of tax relief, loans and direct financial payments to families so that larger families are incentivised and made attractive.

The rationale behind this is that it will encourage social cohesion and community-building whilst also providing a solution to the skewed demographics in the country. Evidence for how effective financial incentives would be are mixed. There seems to be some evidence of a short-term impact but no sustained change in a nation's birth rate increasing unless we take isolated examples into consideration.

For example, Russia's one-off maternity capital payment that was introduced in 2007 had an almost immediate impact but less than a decade later the birth rate in Russia was again declining. The chief reason for this was financial uncertainty, which is a common theme running throughout countries with low birth rates. Thus, we must ensure that financial costs and financial uncertainties are not a problem if we want to see a sustained impact on an overall birth rate. This will, of course, mean that one-off payments should be scrapped and instead tax relief and greater advantages to families should be prioritized.

Reducing the perceived 'necessity' of abortion

One of the most unpopular of liberal policies amongst conservative voters is the issue of abortion and how easy it is to have one. That said, the British people are broadly pro-choice, with the main disagreements being up to how many weeks of pregnancy that a woman can legally have an abortion.

Over 200,00 abortions take place every year in England and Wales with the figure in 2018 reaching 205,295. This is undeniably a significant number. There are two prime means of reducing numbers of terminations in a society. The first is either making terminations less available - which is inconsiderable to many currently in power - or to further make the case for having an abortion less necessary. This latter point is significant: it involves changing the culture. This is a far more likely way of reducing the perceived need for abortion and is more easily attainable. In order to achieve this, we must first invest in educating individuals on pregnancy and how to avoid 'unwanted' ones.

A key way of reducing terminations would be to promote healthy family relationships. A stable, healthy relationship is the perfect environment in which to bring children up and allied with an improved, affordable plan in bringing up a child would see the pressure for abortion greatly reduced.

While ideas such as tax breaks for married couples, financial payments for having children etc. are a good idea, one of the main reasons for not having children and for aborting a child is the financial cost and the impact on one's lifestyle.

A YouGov poll in 2020 found that after age the main reasons for not wanting children were the perceived cost and the impact on lifestyle. Thus, while rising inflation and rent outstrips a rise in wages, the general climate of fear regarding families will continue and as such a major overhaul of the economy is required.

Bearing this financial consideration in mind, the government should do more to support single mothers / pregnant women and those in crisis situations. More also needs to be done to provide counselling that focuses on the needs of the mother and offers a 'second option'. The abortion route is routinely offered as a first solution and this needs to change.

Promote healthy relationships to tackle child mental health epidemic

It is well established that children who grow up in a broken home are more susceptible to suffering from mental health issues than those who grow up in a two-parent home. According to a study carried out by the University College London, children that grow up in a broken home are three times more likely to suffer from mental health problems.. The impact of a marriage break up can have devastating consequences on children, who are then brought up in a high-stress environment.

This is an issue that we cannot afford to be complacent about and it is therefore absolutely critical that the government promotes healthy relationships in order to tackle this crisis. In order to achieve this, emphasis should be put on sex education at school where the benefits of healthy relationships should be explained and promoted. Indeed, dedicated family days in schools would also go a long way in ensuring that the benefits of healthy relationships and families are widely appreciated.

The establishment of a government-funded family mental health group is an essential way of carrying out this. Given the clear evidence that conflict between couples is a driving cause of mental health problems in young people, a family mental health service would help locate the issues early on and provide counselling for specific issues.

Pilot projects would be a shrewd way of ensuring which methods are the most effective and could be subsidized by the government. The government has already pledged £500 million to a new Mental Health Recovery Action Plan and this is what this policy should fall under.

The government should look to secure additional funding for a family mental health service. Ways to do this would be to use money that is misspent and wasted on the NHS such as grossly inflated wages for redundant and divisive roles such as 'Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion'. Despite there naturally being a short-term cost associated with this, the long-term benefits of a healthier and happier society are worth the initial financial impact.

Furthermore, in the event of children being raised in an abusive household, cooperation between local authorities, police, and schools should be encouraged so that children vulnerable to abuse are offered support early on, and not left behind. The link between those abused during childhood and those who suffer mental health problems later in life is well acknowledged, and in tackling it early we can improve society's health on the whole.

The future of the family

The family unit is the basic social unit. As it disappears, society comes under enormous stress. Crime rises; mental health suffers; drug and alcohol abuse proliferate; dissolute young people turn to radical politics.

Demographic trends are not headed in Britain's favour. Britain's birth rate currently stands at 1.68, with a reading of 2.1 being needed just to maintain the population at its present size. Today Britain's population growth is heavily reliant on immigration, a trend that looks set to come under scrutiny after the Brexit referendum.

These numbers are reflective of a disintegrating social fabric. Young Britons are not pairing off and forming stable families. In 1960, there were 344,000 marriages. In 1990, marriages had fallen somewhat, but were still a healthy 331,000. As of 2017, the number of marriages had cratered to 236,000.

But even without focusing on population growth or the cultural pathologies created by a lack of family formation, Britain's population is getting older. In 2000 the age of the average Briton was just under 38. In 2020 it had increased to around 40.5.

Aging societies create enormous economic problems. When a society becomes increasingly dominated by retirees, the percentage of the population active in the workforce falls. This means that a shrinking number of working age people have to support both themselves and the growing number of non-working people. This puts a strain on resources - inflation is sure to follow.

Savings also accumulate amongst the large pool of older people. They begin to control more of the housing market and own more of the company shares listed on the public markets. A two-tier society of older retiree owners and younger worker renters develops. Those doing the work own little; those benefiting from it own most. Intergenerational tension is sure to build and build.

Many countries have tried to improve family formation and birth rates through social democratic means. Scandinavia has famously tried to cater for families through generous childcare subsidies. But even ignoring the serious ethical problems with families outsourcing childcare to state nurseries, this approach has not worked. Birth and marriage rates continue to fall.

We propose that Britain match Hungary's commitment to allocate 5% of GDP to subsidizing family formation in order to ensure that the dark demographic future that awaits us otherwise does not happen.

EDUCATION & INSTITUTIONS

For the orderly running of society, public institutions have to work together cohesively. Yet the root cause of wider social ills is the domination of public institutions by an increasingly narrow, liberal-leftist orthodoxy that cannot be legitimately challenged. This is most obvious within educational establishments. The recent resignation of the Vice Chancellor at Cambridge University after his tempestuous administration is indicative of the impact 'woke culture' is having on Higher Education. However, other areas of the education sector are not exempt from declining standards and outdated philosophy. Andrew Marr has provided an excellent commentary in *A History of Modern Britain* that is worth quoting at length:

"It was the singular misfortune of the comprehensive experiment that coincided with a move away from traditional education to what was called child-centred teaching. In the long run, this may well have been more important than any structural reorganization of schools. Instead of viewing the child as an empty pot, happily large or sadly small, into which a given quantity of facts and values could be poured, the new teaching regarded the child as a magic box, crammed with integrity and surprise, which should be carefully unwrapped. Perhaps a more organic metaphor is called for. The young sapling should be watered and admired, not tied to a stick, nor pruned. Here was a fundamental disagreement about the nature of humanity and social order. Philosophically, it goes back to the French thinkers of the eighteenth century but it was fought out in concrete form in British classrooms throughout this period. The old rows of desks facing a blackboard began to go, and cosy intimate semi-circles of chairs appeared. Children of different abilities were taught in the same room, so that they could learn from each other, causing some chaos and boredom. Topics replaced lists. Grammar retreated and creativity advanced. Teachers began to dress informally and encourage the use of an Adrian or Sara, rather than Sir or Miss. Corporal punishment went from State Schools entirely, and on the vast, windy sites of the seventies comprehensives, with their modernist airiness, discipline loosened. The elite remained mainly in private schools, taught much as their parents and grandparents had been. But across the country, millions of parents shook their heads and wondered. Hostility to comprehensives, which would swell during the eighties and nineties, was much of the time hostility to trendy teaching, the spirit of the sixties which was being marshalled and organized in scores of teacher training colleges."

Strong efforts have to be made to alter the trajectory of British education and implement an alternative approach to forming the minds of young people. This campaign can be begun with following:

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in schools

In September 2020, it became compulsory by law for RSHE to be taught at a primary and secondary school level. The standard lessons and guidelines delineated by the government and Ofsted do not necessarily align with the views of parents and their morals; or the values of most British people.

We must be committed to fighting against improper, unprofessional and inappropriate 'relationship sexual health education' in primary and secondary schools due to the highly concerning emotional and psychological impact it has on young children.

Lynnette Smith, Chair of the Sex Education Forum and a militant advocate the Sex Education of young children, admitted: "We are often told by parents that their child is not ready". Many young children are being emotionally damaged by the materials aggressively promoted in Sex Education classes in schools. A large number of parents have made it clear that their children have been deeply distressed by some of the explicit images and language to which their children have been exposed.

Such inappropriate language and images that have been presented to children as young as 10 years old increases the normalization of paedophilia by promoting a false narrative that children and must be made aware of it. It is imperative that we protect children as vulnerable individuals in society and do not expose them to material that is beyond their natural maturity.

It is of concern that many teachers and educators, who find themselves in an awkward and precarious position, have no clear outline of how to deliver Sex Education and resort to free online material that is not tailor made to individual children's needs and is age appropriate.

Article 23 under "Use of materials" in the government's "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance" appears to encourage such use of online videos, proposing: "There are a lot of excellent resources available, free-of-charge, which schools can draw on when delivering these subjects." This is a gravely unacceptable situation. Despite the following clause which suggests, "schools should assess each resource that they propose to use to ensure that it is appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils", there have been no measures taken to ensure that children are not being exposed to psychologically traumatizing material.

This leads us to question how serious the government appears to be about the mental wellbeing of vulnerable children in society when they are not taking action to prevent them from being psychologically damaged by what is being taught in the classroom?

In the Secretary of State's foreword to the government's "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance" it was propounded that, "It [Sex Education] must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils".

There is clear evidence to show that this is not being respected, as most schools have already decided on the programmes they intend to use based on guidance from other governmentally attached educational bodies, such as Ofsted, taking into no account the opinions of teachers or of parents.

According to the 'Independent poll of 1000 parents, Sex Education Forum, 2018', 80% of parents think RSE teachers should be trained to teach RSE. There is currently no formation program for teachers that would enable them to teach RSE in a way that would respect the different beliefs, backgrounds and values of children and their parents.

Organizations such as 'Fertile Heart' are leading the way in providing alternatives to the current sterile and problematic RSE curriculum, providing a Christian alternative to the standard lessons, which equally focus on promoting the dignity of the human person, and foster individual relationships from a loving, Christian and more traditional perspective, designed for faith schools which require further guidance on how to teach Relationship Education to children as young as between 5-7.

Ultimately, the most important principle in this matter is that the education of children is first and foremost the responsibility of parents and not the state. It is a slippery slope to allow the state to intrude unnecessarily into the lives of private individuals and dictate what should and should not be taught in relation to sex and relationships. This is a gross overreach of governmental intervention.

Ideological bias in the curriculum

The left wing bias in academia has been thoroughly well documented for some time.

Despite the fact that nearly 50% of Britons identify as conservative or right-wing, less than 12 percent of academics describe themselves similarly. We can also assume that the growing rise of self-censorship out of fear of being ostracized or simply being fired from one's workplace amplifies this bias. This is indicative of widespread 'cancel culture' that has resulted from narrowing liberal pluralism.

A YouGov poll found that 32 percent of self-identified "right" or "fairly right" academics had stopped offering their opinions in teaching and research; compared with 15 percent of centrists and left-wingers. This is concerning since there has been a consistent climate of intolerance being fostered in the majority of educational institutions. Academic freedom in speech and thought is a fundamental liberty in a free society and has to be defended at all costs. There must be an immediate and complete rejection of the obfuscation of truth and the refusal to encourage academic freedom.

The well-researched paper on left wing bias in academia by the Adam Smith Institute suggests that ideological homogeneity within the education establishments may produce a number of adverse consequences such as "systematic biases in scholarship; curtailments of free speech on university campuses,".

Both such effects have been incontrovertibly made manifest over the last few years, the more concerning being the crackdown on freedom of speech and freedom of opinion at Universities.

Even moderate Conservative politicians have been barred from speaking on University Campuses, as was the case with Amber Rudd whose talk was cancelled at the University of Oxford due to her political background. The liberal, leftist overrepresentation in educational establishments may be attributed not only to the marginalization of those of a different opinion, but also the effects of outright discrimination. We must endeavor to raise awareness of these double standards, being alert to any discriminatory behaviour in schools and universities and responding with punitive measures.

In April of 2015, the Times Higher Education (THE) ran an online poll open to anyone with a UK university email address, which asked respondents whom they intended to vote for in the upcoming election: 46% said Labour, 22% said Green, 11% said the Conservatives.

This poll was taken prior to the vote for Brexit, and since then, it is arguable that the tribalistic division between 'leftists' and 'conservatives' has become tangibly more marked. In a more recent TES poll conducted before the 2019 general election, 49 per cent of UK teachers voted Labour. The same poll showed 80 per cent of teachers would vote Remain in a second referendum. The crux of the problem lies with the fact that it is the growing trend with educators is to assume responsibility for deciding what ought to be the ideals and values of the students they teach, imparting on impressionable pupils intrinsically anti-British, left wing ideology.

We must aim to promote healthy debate in school classrooms and combat the policing of classrooms for 'hate speech' and the silencing of dissenting voices. The school classroom - which is supposed to be a stimulating, creative and nurturing environment for children's personal development - has morphed into a sterile atmosphere for militant indoctrination - as the left wing dogmas of feminism and Marxism go unchallenged.

Pupils who dare to argue against the dominant postmodernist 'woke' narratives are often humiliated or unjustly accused by their teachers. Classrooms are no longer places of free debate and intellectual growth but have become places of oppression where critical thinking is stifled and Marxist ideologies endlessly peddled.

Ofsted, Gender Ideology and Critical Race Theory

The Ofsted organization as an entity is in dire need of major reform. The government must endeavor to conduct thorough independent research into the organization and hold it accountable for its actions, which have long overstepped its original remit.

Ofsted's Inspections are no longer focused on raising school and educational standards. Instead, inspections and methods of collecting evidence tend to focus on secondary issues. This has been documented by recent research from Policy Exchange in which Ofsted was found to be biased against Christian and Jewish faith schools. This risks us losing the religious pluralism in education which has always been present in England.

Ofsted is disproportionately preoccupied with implementing the Equality Act 2010 and with schools conforming to the liberal interpretation of the legislation. There is an overt and often explicit focus on gender reassignment and sexual orientation that appears to cooperate with the phrase 'muscular liberalism' from the chief inspector, Amanda Spielman. This also reflects that Ofsted are unmoved by the valid concerns of parents.

By law, Ofsted must assess the 'achievement of pupils'. However, Ofsted has, by successive steps, moved away from this core focus. New criteria in the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) can lead to poor judgements based on inspectors' judgements of teaching methods or a school's ethos, even where pupil outcomes are good.

The EIF includes the highly subjective concept of 'pupil development' which could easily be applied differently by different inspectors, and is particularly problematic where the inspector's view of the purpose of education differs from the schools under inspection. This can leave schools in a vulnerable position and without clarity on how they will be graded.

According to research, Ofsted has a longstanding alliance with Stonewall and only cut ties in the aftermath of the recent revelation surrounding the disgraced lobbyist group. In tandem with this radical organization it has been cooperative through its public priorities and as can be read in the self-evident speeches of Amanda Spielman in the plot to redefine 'British values'. As mentioned prior, it has also fully embraced partisan politics with its obsession over protected characteristics.

Another insidious branch of 'nouveau Marxist' ideology that is making its way subversively through the education system at all levels is Critical Race Theory. Made more popular than ever by the surge of Black Lives Matter over the past two years, it counts simply as more partisan politics and is therefore totally illegal as an agenda to be taught in the education system. Equalities minister Kemi Badenoch revealingly told the Spectator in a recent interview: 'Many people don't realise that [critical race theory] is political, it's getting into institutions that really should be neutral: schools, NHS trusts, and even sometimes the civil service.'

There must be a strong approach to combating the harmful, divisive, menacing influence which Gender Ideology and Critical Race Theory (CRT) inflicts on children in schools and at university level. These toxic left wing theories have infiltrated the classroom and the lecture theatre, creating hostility between peers and sowing seeds of confusion, guilt, and self-loathing among pupils and academics.

We must endeavour to combat the overreaching power which trans-lobby activists and 'social-justice' lobbyists exert over the educational establishment. We can only do this by fundamental change in the way the government approaches its education priorities. Funding and gestures are no longer enough, the approach must be hands on and sincere.

To avoid the sweeping march of an ideology that takes no prisoners, we need independent, honest and robust reviews into all institutional levels of the educational system. In addition, academics and educational professionals must be able to feel comfortable to express themselves openly and engage in the cultivation of young people rather than cower against the dominance of liberalism and postmodernism.

Such a collective effort, with proper targeting, will reap rewards that include the sensible allocation of resources and an active willingness to address past failures. The government would be doing itself a justice by assessing and detailing more clarity in education law, for the sake of ensuring that those who are reviewing the education system cannot find blurred lines within which to implement their own agendas.

ARCHITECTURE & AESTHETICS

Of all forms of art, as created by human rather than divine hands, architecture remains both the most public and the most functional, with philosophers ranging from Hegel to Scruton asserting that it exists apart from the more representational forms of art, such as poetry and painting. But it is also this idea of the public acting both as active and passive stakeholders concurrently in architecture that makes it integral for the aim of architecture to be something other than pure aesthetics or being designed a certain way because the architect likes the way it looks. As American architect Joseph Esherick once wrote:

"Beauty is a consequential thing, a product of solving problems correctly ... Preoccupation with aesthetics leads to arbitrary design."

Problems arise when architects focus too much on creating something to their preferred style, in the styles that will win them awards and commendation from their peers. Problems of an objective appeal, problems of exponentially deteriorating functionality, problems of redundancy that accompany aesthetics à la mode.

Such problems thus transcend architecture as art into architecture as tangible space; homes become too expensive and outdated; workplaces become uninspiring and un conducive to achievement; culture across the world becomes an amalgam of whitewashed walls and fluorescent lighting whether you are in Bayswater or Beijing.

This is what needs changing, and it does not come from the adage of beauty for beauty's sake, but from solving human problems and watching the beauty that emerges thenceforth in everyday life.

The Social Housing Problem

There is no denying that these problems are often most experienced by those least fortunate in our society, and subsequently that is where the majority of this analysis will focus.

The roots of the United Kingdom's housing crisis may lie over half a century in the past, but its effects only grow more strongly the more time passes without viable solutions. In recent decades the cost of buying or renting a home has risen disproportionately with wages, resulting in each generation facing more and more financial inability to become homeowners and precipitating a large portion of the population to seek out social housing.

Despite this meteoric rise in housing costs, government funding for building affordable housing has decreased sharply, from approximately 50% of the cost of a new house before the financial crash of 2008 to just 12% now.

A large part of this problem also comes from poor government funding practices which favour private landlords, with the group receiving approximately £9 billion of funding in 2018, an increase of 100% from the decade prior. Coupled with a total yearly housing benefit payout of a staggering £22 billion, this amount is larger than the entire government spending on policing and international development combined.

While there should be a large increase in the amount of social housing built and the amount of funding allocated to this, it would not be enough to neglect quality in favour of quantity, which appears to be the route that recent government endeavours have undertaken. An important report by the Royal Institute for British Architects published at the end of 2020 outlines how a higher living standard in social housing should arise, with a focus being on more adequate financing, procurement and oversight.

The main recommendations from this report are part of the key process which the government should take: give local authorities more control over housing affairs in their local areas; remove their borrowing and spending restrictions; give them scope to set their own planning fees to ensure appropriate and sustainable investment.

This leads to the key reason for the current failure of social housing: building functional, sustainable and attractive homes costs a substantial amount of money, however the potential return on investment in this case would be multifaceted and worth every penny.

Where people live – not just their house, but their street, their neighbourhood – affects the lives of all in the surrounding area, influencing their mood, their opinions, their worldview, and has a fundamental impact on the quality of life for everyone related to it. This is the intrinsic purpose of housing as architecture, to provide functionality, but more than just the bare minimum. As Hegel said:

"For when architecture serves a purpose, the real purpose is there independently ... as human individuals as a community or nation for ends which are universal."

This idea may be beginning to take root in the government following the disaster at Grenfell Tower in 2017. Three years on from this, a white paper for social housing was drafted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which reinforced the importance of residents having a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.

Despite this, however, the National Design Guide published by the Housing Ministry – which attempts to lay down some rules and guidance for planners and architects to follow – does not appear to be being followed. The guide advocates for the same idea of community and sustainability that has been mentioned above, stating:

"Local character makes places distinctive. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users ... a sense of pride."

While such statements are undoubtedly well-intentioned, they are devoid of any real meaning unless they are legislated into being. A brief look through the aforementioned social housing report by the RIBA will show you a plethora of "good" examples of social housing which do not have anything close to resembling local character or a strong identity. They reflect nothing but the identity of the architects and designers.

This is perhaps where more local authority control on such matters may help, if architects who understand the local traditions and identity can be drafted in to help matters.

This does not mean designing things that one would view as "old fashioned" - it means designing social housing that may use local materials; fit seamlessly into the local urban landscape; be designed to Passivhaus standards of sustainability; have shared safe spaces for children; be surrounded by or in proximity to green spaces or other natural fixtures. Such developments must be futureproof.

They must be sympathetic to their surroundings and passers-by and must not be made redundant through an inability to find people who want to live there in the years to come. Solving the social housing problem will not happen overnight, nor even over several years, but it starts with a change of attitude towards how we view housing as a whole.

The issues faced by first-time buyers:

It is no secret that the possibility of the average young person in the UK finding a spot on the property ladder is at its lowest level in recent history. As mentioned earlier, house prices have been increasing at a rate quicker than wages, with rent prices following just as sharp a trend.

According to the Home Owners' Alliance the situation is especially dire: 97% of aspiring first-time buyers feel that there is a serious problem with the system, with almost 60% of renters feeling that they will never be able to own their own house. The Chief Executive of the HOA Paula Higgins marks this as an immense failure of government, stating:

"Government needs to rethink its approach by thinking more holistically and long-term ... It also demonstrates how government and industry is failing a whole generation."

While this situation as a whole is unprecedentedly atrocious, according to a recent report by the HOA the fastest rising issue is an architectural one: the quality of homes themselves, especially new builds.

For the current government, the view is that by increasing the number of homeowners this will effectively translate into an increased number of Conservative voters who will owe their new homeownership to the government.

Subsequently, many new houses are being built, but not to a standard acceptable for habitation, with repairs to structural problems being more difficult to resolve and oftentimes having to be footed by the leaseholder.

A large part of this problem comes from insufficient regulation on what and when large housebuilders can build. There is currently no regulated contractual obligation for builders to take up opportunities for building aside from breaking ground once planning permission has been granted; approximately 80% of residential building permits are now granted, with permits for over a million homes currently being unused.

This manufactures a supply and demand bubble resulting in an easily resolvable housing shortage, ensuring house prices remain high and profits soar even higher. During 2020, Persimmon Homes, one of the largest housebuilders in the UK, returned a gross profit of almost £900 million in a year characterized by vast financial hardship for the general population. They also retained over £1.7 billion worth of land that is not currently being worked on, inflating house prices due to a manufactured lack of supply. It is unimaginable that such modus operandi are acceptable given the current economic climate.

There are a few potential solutions to such problems, all of them legally enforceable and all of which would, as is the government's aim, allow younger members of society easier access to homeownership which may translate to increased Conservative vote share in the young.

One of which, and the most obvious, is to introduce a time clause for building on sites for which planning permission has been granted. This, coupled with an introduction of council tax payments for such sites, would incentivize construction to commence as early as possible, helping mitigate any potential financial gains for the house building companies associated with waiting while giving much needed additional funding to local councils.

This funding, when shared with local authorities in addition to the increased planning powers they should be granted which I have mentioned in the previous section, would ensure that developments are properly constructed (as tenants would subsequently have recognizable local public officials to hold accountable if this does not occur) and in a time frame acceptable to the local community and the housing market in general.

Furthermore, this inclusion of local councils would mean planning for related infrastructure and transport links for new developments could be carried out more exactly, quickly and with more cogent understanding of local need for amenities due to an increased efficiency and ease of access as liaison would be largely within local government bodies rather than relying on external organizations for information.

In the immediate future, I would advocate for a comprehensive external inquiry into the state of building and housing affairs in the UK as to who the governmental beneficiaries are of the current oligopoly in the industry and why meaningful, lasting reforms have not yet taken place aside from placatory planning reforms which do little in real terms to mitigate the harm dealt on the most underprivileged age demographic in our society.

For the government, it seems, the question must be asked about which is more important to their survival at the next general election: private financial interests or making true on housing promises made to young people.

The question of preference in aesthetics

As mentioned previously, architecture and otherwise aesthetic art is of paramount public importance, whose stakeholders are not limited to those who engage with the function of the objects or buildings in question, but rather are those to which a passive effect or feeling is conferred, through the objects or buildings as singular items or, more commonly, collectively in the idea spoken of as "space".

Public spaces, therefore, have the public as their stakeholders, and whose passive engagement with them on a daily basis undoubtedly influences all facets of their life, much as passively consuming other "art forms" such as music or television shapes an individual's worldview. The difference, however, between art as intangible forms such as music and art as a physical aesthetic form is that, unlike the former, the latter does not lend itself to subjectivity, in that the idea of a subjective "taste" in architecture can be viewed as either right or wrong objectively.

Scruton wrote that for this subject parallels can be made with the broad philosophy of science, in that a difference of opinions means in its simplest form that at least one of the parties involved in dispute is suffering from a diminished understanding of the topic, that is to say that they are objectively wrong.

If one is to believe, as one should, in an objective morality and an objective sense of right and wrong, and that aesthetics are both a product of and precipitative of a certain worldview, then one can deduce that there are certain styles and traditions relative to the various cultures of the world which act most in favour of the common good. Scruton went on to write about such an idea of preference:

"It is the outcome of thought and education; it is expressive of moral, religious and political feelings, of an entire Weltanschauung, with which our identity is mingled. Our deepest convictions seek confirmation in the experience of architecture, and it is simply not open to us to dismiss these convictions as matters of arbitrary preference about which others are free to make up their minds, any more than it is open to us to think the same of our feelings about murder, rape or genocide."

While Scruton wrote much about the inextricable nature of experience, preference and thought when it came to architectural appreciation, these things are intangible and emotional and cannot be easily categorized or described. One such facet of aesthetic design and planning which can, however, be described and subsequently embodied purposefully is the psychological aspect, that is, what innate feelings the individual has as a result of their evolutionary development encoded into their DNA.

While feelings of beauty and disgust, albeit objective, have arisen largely through generations of human design and conditioning and vary across cultures, other ideas such as safety are intrinsic in the human experience and are the same across all demographics. It is through this point that one can look at the psychological needs of the individual and incorporate these into the design of public spaces.

One such quantifiable characteristic of this vein is the idea of thigmotaxis, that an individual of any species feels more safe when situated around edges or walls than in wide, open spaces. Speak to anyone who has experienced any level of military training and they will tell you they are consciously aware of this in public, often choosing to sit by walls in restaurants or cafes as a way to watch all entrances and exits; the average person, while still embodying these principles in practice, is not consciously aware of their doing so in the majority of cases.

The importance of this principle can and should be easily embodied in contemporary city planning; planted beds for flowers or trees; benches dividing up areas; well-designed footpaths and crossings; all of these things divide up spaces into separate areas, places with an entrance and edges, places to stroll or sit comfortably where you know, deep down, you are safe. Daniel Herriges, senior editor of *Strong Towns*, pointed to the effectiveness with which Savannah, Georgia utilises this psychology of edges:

"An edge is a boundary between two things, which means every edge is also a gateway to something, a point of transition. The squares and the sidewalks of Savannah are gateways to the city."

This idea of transitioning between two separate areas, from one place to another, is key in good public planning, giving places a distinct feel and attracting people for a distinct purpose, thus increasing the feelings of safety and security they feel there as the realization comes that everyone else there is just like them.

There are many other aspects of the aesthetics of planning to be garnered from thinking about how to embody evolutionary psychological traits, such as eradicating fluorescent lighting in favour of realistic lighting, using greenery and green spaces in a natural way to mimic or encourage natural occurrence as opposed to plants and flowers just for the sake of them.

This type of thinking when it comes to how public spaces should be structured is not revolutionary; rather, it is exactly the opposite. It is about returning to your roots, about doing things that come naturally and espouse goodness in those who interact with them. It is about fostering a sense of home and a sense of belonging in the places that people visit and live.

It is about conserving local traditions and highlighting those which are already there, about showing them off to visitors and making them say "this is great - they don't do this where I come from". This is the true nature of conservatism in architecture and aesthetics, and it is essential to embody such ideas if the Party wants to maintain some truth to its name.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Our attitude towards the environment should differ little from our good and ordinary conservative disposition.

"The true spirit of conservation sees the past not as a commercialized 'heritage', but as a living inheritance, something that lasts because it lives in me." - Roger Scruton, Green Philosophy

Our mission to restore a nation and a culture firmly rooted in tradition, that exhorts the value of virtue and community over dispossessed individualism, can only succeed with an accompanying restoration of the natural environment that we share. Like our traditions, we have inherited our patch of the earth and thus possess a duty to ensure it is passed on without detriment, so that it too may serve our children and our children's children.

It is surely the case that if our countrymen are stakeholders in anything, it is in the common home on which we together rely. We would be wise to harken to the wisdom of Theodore Roosevelt, that sharing the environmental concerns of the modern age signals not a progressive but a deeply conservative sentiment and requires deeply conservative solutions.

"The 'greatest good for the greatest number' applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations."

Likewise, we have a duty to reject the liberal conception of nature as a mere tool through which human desires are satisfied and scientific progress is achieved. The earliest philosophers of the enlightenment exalted man's progress as a tool that would facilitate the complete servitude of nature to man. Descartes conceived of man as not only the "masters" but the "possessors of nature". His contemporary, Francis Bacon, erroneously understood the "task and purpose of human power" as the introduction of a "new nature" upon all of creation. We must therefore be willing to embrace the mystical in nature that transcends utility and nurtures not only the body, but the soul and imagination of a people. Environmental stewardship should become for us as much cultural and spiritual duty as a practical one.

"For me, reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning. Imagination, producing new metaphors or revivifying old, is not the cause of truth, but its condition." - C.S. Lewis

Put simply, we care only for that which we love. If we are to care for our nation's natural environment, we must love our nation and if we love our nation we must care for its environment.

I propose three simple 'pillars' of orthodox green conservatism that practically apply this logic to provide basic philosophical underpinnings and useful heuristics in developing environmental policy.

1. We are charged to be good stewards of creation. Our relationship with the natural world must not be primarily driven by a desire for possession and mastery nor a misanthropic veneration but motivated by care and protection for our common home.
2. We claim that natural and moral ecology are interdependent and complimentary. That is to say, you cannot have one without the other and if it is our duty to protect one it is likewise our duty to protect the other.
3. We reject the theory that 'global problems require global solutions.' While global cooperation is considered necessary, changes in attitude and action towards nature will only arise from, and be enacted successfully at, local scales.

Energy

Despite our national energy demand steadily decreasing for over two decades, our dependence on energy imports have reached levels unheard of for 50 years.

The situation has grown so dire that imports, primarily composed of oil and gas, now provide a greater proportion of our energy supply than the entirety of our nation's low carbon sources.¹ In an age of international instability and increasing global demand, the effects of this reliance have started to become clear with a 12% rise in the energy price cap and a further rise expected in 2022.

While investment in renewables must continue, they currently achieve little but to shift our dependence towards foreign fossil fuels, defeating their environmental aims while financially burdening British consumers.

We strongly support increased development of nuclear energy as an alternative that is both greener and safer than fossil fuels and more reliable than conventional renewables. Therefore government assistance, through direct subsidies and contracts for difference, of the current and proposed constructions at Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C should continue to form a central priority of our energy policy.

Construction of two further stations in Moorside and Essex, identified as suitable sites by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, should begin by 2025. Financial assistance should be provided through direct government equity that will both serve to replace current Chinese state investment and drive down long-term increases in energy costs.

We strongly believe that this provides our best opportunity to create a world-leading, self-sufficient, green energy supply that assists rather than hinders the integration of renewables and buffers the UK against international energy crises.

The British Countryside

It has proven difficult to communicate to fellow conservatives the scale of loss of our natural heritage in Britain for two reasons. Firstly, we feel as if we are ceding ground to the left by

acknowledging an ongoing ecological crisis. More importantly, we have become so thoroughly severed from the beauty of our isles that we are blind to the immensity of its scourging.

Less than a century ago, the colours and smells of hay meadows adorned the summer landscape of our countryside, yet today they have all but disappeared. Only three in every one hundred wildflower meadows that existed in the 1930s survived to 1980s. That's uncountable acres of the home of so many of our birds, butterflies, bees and bats, erased over a few short decades by those who thought that they knew better than the past. The story is the same for our heathlands, our woodlands, our rivers and our wetlands - they were lost at a rate of 1000 square kilometres every year for 40 years in the mid-19th century.

The greatest enemy of the British countryside has continued to be industrial and corporate agriculture.

In the post-war period, concerns regarding low and unstable agricultural output prompted government policy that promoted the specialization of agriculture towards intensively managed monocultures. In 1947, The Agricultural Act encouraged this by introducing minimum price guarantees for many crops and livestock.

Later aggressive intervention purchasing and high export subsidies of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy incentivized yet more expansion of intensive agriculture. Combined with newly developed chemical fertilizers, herbicides and the high yielding varieties of the green revolution, our countryside stood little chance.

The subsequent careless abuse of agrochemicals has led to devastating eutrophication of our rivers, lakes and oceans, stimulating unnatural algal growth and therefore depleting the water of its oxygen. Today, not even one in five of England's surface water bodies are in 'good ecological status' and over 400 'dead zones' of up 60,000 square miles each are rendering our oceans lifeless.

While our approach to stewardship must accept that we are unable to cease industrial agriculture, pollution or consumer waste, our duty remains to temper the most harmful tendencies of the modern economy through the application of the wisdom of tradition.

The great defender of our countryside, Sir Roger Scruton, defined sustainability, in contrast to its perverted liberal definition, as that which "can go on for the foreseeable future without irreversible harm". This is the principle to which our environmental policy must remain faithful.

Agriculture and conservation

Firstly, our exit from the CAP must be used as an opportunity to phase out area-based subsidies and basic payments that benefit the largest industrial farms while making small-scale sustainable farming financially impossible. With this in mind, we support the proposed Environmental Land Management scheme (ELM), that will be introduced in earnest in 2024.

However, our greatest concern is that it adopts a logic of dividing 'wild' nature from farmland by giving large grants to farmers only for restoring natural habitats while encouraging little change in the agricultural system itself. Unfortunately, this is further confirmed by the single-minded focus on the "national effort to reach Net Zero", which appears to form the primary motivation behind these reforms in DEFRA's recent detailing of the 'Path to Sustainable Farming'.

We claim that by ensuring our countryside and food system endures, it will serve not only the climate but the health of our wildlife and population. Therefore, the proposed tiers of standards with associated increases in payments, should focus on protection of a wide array of ecosystem services, those natural processes that support and regulate agriculture.

Key services consistently identified in the scientific literature include soil structure, nutrient cycling, pollination and water purification. An intersection of scientific research and traditional knowledge has identified those actions that best conserve these services and therefore should form the basis of requirements under the ELM scheme. These include reduced tillage depths to conserve soil organic matter and microbial communities, use of integrated pest management to reduce pesticide application, use of cover crops to reduce soil erosion and boundaries of sequentially flowering, native plants to improve pollination.

While generic 'standards' are necessary, the prescriptive bureaucratic approach to which we have too long been subject has failed. For example, the defunct 2005 Environmental Stewardship Scheme awarded half of all payments for generic boundary management that benefits few species and largely acted as a second income for corporate farms that could most easily comply.

The financial incentives made available through ceasing area-based subsidies must be applied at distinctively local scale through genuine collaboration with farmers to avoid a repeat of this failure. For this purpose, we propose the creation of Regional Farming Initiatives to assist in the introduction and maintenance of locally and historically considerate sustainable agriculture in areas of particular ecological or historical importance.

The rolling hills of the Cotswolds may serve as an example of our vision. A region historically grazed by sheep in gentle mixed farming has become hidden behind thousands of acres of oilseed rape and cereals due decades of aggressive EU subsidies. Its fragile limestone grasslands and alkaline soils are so unsuited to the task that they must be drowned in agrochemicals and fed by industrial irrigation that now threatens the idyllic heart of England.

Here, specific grants should be made available for transitioning to a traditional mixed farming system of sheep grazing accompanied by a crop rotation, the likes of which were practiced here for many centuries. This would not only serve to increase native biodiversity, but similar traditional practices have shown in sites across Britain and around the world to provide more efficient use of nutrients, restore soil structure, reduce energy use and increase productivity.

Food security and local initiatives

The UK's agricultural self-sufficiency has been in steady decline for over three decades. During this time, we have remained content to rely on increasingly liberalized global markets to provide an illusion of domestic food security, much to the benefit of agri-industrial hegemony. As the global food economy becomes ever-more fragile, threatened by climate change, resource shortages and international conflict, the UK may be left starving in times of crisis if we refuse to adopt a critically local approach.

While we remain broadly self-sufficient in many important outputs including meat and cereals, our self-sufficiency in fruit and vegetables has utterly collapsed.¹⁸ The native fruit orchards which once nurtured an entire nation and now only provide 15% of the fruit we consume. However, the British people, in their conservative nature, have a strong will to support our own farmers and 74% of the British public would prefer to purchase in-season British fruit. Therefore, it is essential that DEFRA should institute a 'UK Agricultural Resilience' programme in order to support greater establishment and productivity of produce for which we severely lack self-sufficiency.

The motivation for British consumers to buy local produce appears to be even stronger than the pull towards organic or perceived 'ecologically friendly' produce. Yet, accessing this produce remains difficult and the potential to strengthen the ties between small-scale farming, the natural landscape and communities is wasted. Therefore, we propose the creation of Local Food Initiatives which promote the sourcing of local produce by individuals and small retailers through localized 'clusters' of processing and distribution infrastructure which operates outside the supermarket system.

This should also be combined with a relaxation of the regulatory burden of storage, packaging and point of sale on small farmers. This will assist local authorities to set-up farmers' markets, box schemes and links with local shops, which previously lacked not demand, but necessary infrastructure. It will also aid public bodies in sourcing their produce directly from local suppliers so that a 50% 'local food' target should be set for schools and hospitals.

Producers involved with a similar 'Devon Food Link' project reported conversion of 150 hectares of land to organic production and an average of one more full-time employee per farm that was involved with the local food economy. This illustrates that through localizing and shortening supply chains, the supposed environmental-economic trade-off that dominates green policy, ceases to exist.

British Habitat directives

"If someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple. If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behaviour." -
Laudato Si, Pope Francis

Conservation policy must also possess a distinctly human aspect. We must aspire to restore the stake that ordinary people have a common right to possess in our countryside. This stands in firm opposition to an age where the British people spend barely one hour outdoors each day and even a stinging nettle is a foreign sight to more than half of our children.

We propose the creation of a 'Conservation Corps' scheme for 16-25-year-old men and women that will work to renew the habitats that once covered our country but are all but lost, including tree-planting and restoration of our meadows, heathland, wetlands and freshwater bodies. The scheme will train young people in traditional agricultural and rural skills which will aim to provide meaningful employment and support reduced intensity local agriculture with its naturally greater labour demands.

The scheme will also serve as a national vocational training programme for many of our most important and in-demand industries such as sustainable agriculture, forestry and conservation as well wider land-based vocations including engineering and construction.

Unfortunately, habitat restoration has become synonymous with 'tree-planting' in vernacular and policy language. As a result, unsuitable woodland creation in long-established moorlands has severely impacted populations of some of our most loved wildlife. Most recently it has been held responsible for the decline of the meadow pipit in Scottish uplands. Therefore, habitat restoration must adopt a holistic approach that exclusively utilises native species while considering the unique ecological history of each site and greater attention should be given to conservation of heaths, bogs and grassland.

It is impossible to attempt to address our alienation from nature while ignoring the fact that we currently enjoy a right to access only 8% of England's countryside. Therefore, we strongly support protection of the current Right to Roam under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) and an extension to this act to include most woodlands, rivers and fragmented downlands.

We further support the creation of 'Community Nature Reserves' in nature-deprived areas that operate outside of scientifically oriented habitat directives which have concentrated natural beauty in increasingly small areas of our country. These should form a network of restored public parks and gardens, woodlands, meadows and allotments that will improve much needed urban access to greenspace, which has declined by over 10% since the turn of the century.

Waste

It is a great disgrace of modern conservatism that we have so guiltlessly averted our eyes from the problem of waste. It is perhaps because recognising its existence reminds us ever so clearly of the consequences of our over-consumption and exposes to us the costs of an unrestricted global economy that fails to see past its next quarter's earnings.

The UK produces an unconscionable 222 millions tons of waste every year. An enormous 67% of this is exported to poorer countries where their food and water supplies are poisoned by the chemicals that leach out over long centuries. This has become such a terrible epidemic in our largest importer of plastic waste, Turkey, that they have simply begun to refuse to accept it. Soon, we will have no choice but to give up the illusion that waste can simply be swept under the rug as an inconvenience to be burdened on our neighbours, and begin to be responsible for our own consumption.

"They should not think it among their rights to cut off the entail or commit waste on the inheritance by destroying at their pleasure the whole original fabric of their society, hazarding to leave to those who come after them a ruin instead of an habitation" - Reflections on a Revolution in France, Edmund Burke

Firstly, we must tackle the greatest scourge of them all. Plastics. Up to 6% of Europe's oil and gas is consumed in their manufacture. The darkest depths of the oceans nor the remotest forests have escaped their torment. Their breakdown and accumulation in the natural world has made them inescapable in our own lifestyles (and even diet) and will do so for many ages to come. A whole host of diseases from obesity to ovarian disease are not only caused by exposure to plastics but the offspring of individuals exposed are at greater risk of these diseases even if they have not been exposed themselves. It's no surprise they have been so strongly implicated in the fertility decline of the developed world.

Our goal must be to create a circular economy in plastics with the aspiration of eventual obsolescence. Therefore, we must achieve the highest possible rate of retention of raw materials while maintaining them in the highest quality so that they remain capable of being re-used universally in manufacturing.

Firstly, we must introduce a wide-ranging deposit return scheme for single use plastic containers including cups, bottles and cans. A similar programme has seen exceeding success in Lithuania and as a result they now comfortably lead the EU with recycling rates as high as 90% for bottles and cans. Such a scheme already has the widespread support of over three quarters of the British public.

Secondly, we must transition towards a ban on non-recyclable plastic for products in which they are not considered essential.

This may provoke concerns from groups of conservatives who claim it is unbecoming to issue such restrictions on free trade. Our response should be simple. Is it conservative that supermarkets are free to distribute an unlimited quantity of single-use plastic to be instantly wasted and incur untold externalized environmental, ecological and health costs with which both the supermarket and the customers will burden the unborn? Guiding the power of market innovation to produce viable plastic packaging alternatives is not only essential but also profoundly conservative.

Both plastics manufacturing and recycling in the UK must undergo strict standardization reform to ensure that only a small number of specific polymers are approved for single-use plastics. This will accompany a new generation of domestic plastic recycling plants. Industrial research carried out this year by the Sustainable Consumption Institute has suggested that these reforms will not only provide for greater retention rates throughout the recycling process but will also improve collection rates by allowing curbside collection from a single bin.

Aside from plastics, it is clear that our green future will be strongly reliant on rare earth metals and minerals for use in renewable energy production and battery technology. In fact, we are expected to see a 600% increase in demand for critical minerals by 2040 under our net-zero aspirations, yet today hardly 1% are recycled and the government lacks any specific critical mineral policy. Not only does this render us dependent on international material supplies which are growing more unstable as domestic demand in exporters such as China increases but calls into question the sustainability of so-called sustainable technology.

Research funding for projects that focus on rare earth metal recycling, such as the Hydrogen Processing for Magnetic Scrap centre in Birmingham, should form an environmental and economic priority. Therefore, a specific Earth Metals and Critical Minerals Recycling Fund should be instituted so that several grants are awarded for the creation of large-scale extractive metallurgy facilities. Together with support of national and international regulations which require technology that uses critical minerals are to be 'designed to recycle', a circular economy may be established in these increasingly precious raw materials.

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

The foundation of Western Civilization is widely agreed to be intertwined with the historical advance of the Christian faith.

Christian principles are used or adapted in one form or another in modern parlance; and most Judeo-Christian principles coincide with modern perceptions of what constitutes ethical behaviour and tolerance. British social norms, such as monogamy and (in most cases) the protection of innocent life are in keeping with Judeo-Christian values, and build on Greek and Latin socio-cultural principles and philosophical foundations.

Some go so far as to argue that without an understanding and appreciation of the foundational effect of the Christian faith in western society we cannot hope to understand or conserve the West as we know it today.

Despite this rich cultural history, the West has seen a slow decline in the Christian faith over the course of a few hundred years, to the first quarter of the 21st century; by which time, sped up by the technological boom, most of its cultural grip had been decimated.

In the first 10 years of the new millennium, the number of Christians in the UK fell by approximately 10,000 per week. A more recent opinion survey displayed that 52% of Britons now identify as non-religious. This attitude was further accentuated by a report which discovered that a paltry 21% of young adult (16-29 years old) Britons would identify as Christian.

With the rapid disappearance of Christianity from our social fabric, another set of social values has inevitably begun to fill the void left by a mass exodus from this worldview. It is also a very natural effect that a new way of defining human identity has begun to become the norm.

It is first necessary to acknowledge that this huge cultural shift is institutional. An oft-quoted survey from 2016, conducted by the Adam Smith Institute, found 8 out of 10 university lecturers to hold left-leaning (and liberal) worldviews.

These sorts of statistics suggest that individuals in positions of formative and educational authority - having now been formed by a society slipping away from Christian beliefs - will be formed by the strongest ideologies that seek to replace it. Marx said that "the premise of all criticism is the criticism of religion." In a critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, he wrote further, "the abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness" and so it seems fitting that those who lean towards a more liberal and Marxist worldview determine his worldview to be correct will follow suit in suspicion and even destruction of Judeo-Christian beliefs.

Regardless of personal belief, it is important to note that where the religious building blocks of what was (until the 'Enlightenment') an almost homogeneously Christian civilization begin to crumble, other values and sets of cultural currency must necessarily begin to fill their place. The principle of ideological replacement is self-evident across human history. To ascertain if Christianity or its values are worth culturally preserving, it is best to observe which ideologies could be seen as its successor in the West and to determine if it is desirable for this shift to occur.

In the absence of Christianity, secular individuals have adopted and readily embraced postmodernism to close the void that organized religion usually fills with its coherent set of values and principles by which one can live freely and happily. This has resulted in the unhealthy obsession with gender ideology at all levels of society; an ever increasing list of sexual and cultural identities; hyper-focus on ethnic categorizations and even anti-normative fashion choices. Indeed, the individual's identity in the landscape of the modern world is broken down into subsets that far reduce Boethius's 'persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia' ('the person is an individual substance of a rational nature'), to a series of rude and often ambiguous classifications. The breakaway from a classical perspective on human identity is a void that will, without counter, be filled by the strongest proponents of alternative theories on social structure.

The Lords Spiritual

The decline of 'spiritual' authority and any meaningful political contribution is becoming more and more evident in the case of the Lords Spiritual. They no longer represent any authoritative form of Christianity and for many Christians, the Church of England has become overtly susceptible to change in its pastoral approach to key faith issues.

To cite this, two important matters in terms of Christian conscience appear to have been pastorally neglected or indeed altered from historical and scriptural meaning.

Clarity on the nature of marriage between one man and one woman is no longer as definitively expressed through the Church of England;

"The Church of England will continue to place a high value on theological exploration and debate that is conducted with integrity. That is why Church of England clergy are able to argue for a change in its teaching on marriage and human sexuality, while at the same time being required to fashion their lives consistently with that teaching." - Church of England media statement, 2014

The Church of England also diverts from excluding abortion entirely - "The Church of England combines strong opposition to abortion with a recognition that there can be - strictly limited - conditions under which it may be morally preferable to any available alternative." (Briefing Paper prepared by the Mission and Public Affairs Council [MPA] for General Synod, February 2005) In the rare occasions when abortion is carried out beyond 24 weeks, 'Serious foetal handicap' should be interpreted strictly as applying to those conditions where survival is possible only for a very short period' (1995 Resolution of General Synod, quoted in 2005 briefing paper).

In a 2012 comment, Open Democracy noted that from a political perspective, the Lords Spiritual are not proportionally representative of the nations in the union; "Lord Tyler pointed to the anomaly of having religious representation from one of the four nations of the United Kingdom but not from the other three."

From the same passage it can be demonstrated that neither do they possess great political ability. Baroness Scott of Needham Market challenged the representative character of the bishops, if of the 42 English dioceses, only twenty-six (to be reduced to twelve) are represented at any given time. In transcribed response to questioning by Daniel Poulter (Conservative, Central Suffolk and North Ipswich), the Archbishop of Canterbury admitted that the more intense demands on a smaller number of bishops would present the question 'of their having to act more like professional politicians in the sense of giving the time'. (He attempted to retract the characterization under further questioning).

Thus, both from a 'spiritual' and 'political' perspective it can be agreed that the Lords Spiritual is in heavy need of reform or may in fact be derelict until such reform can be properly commissioned and effected. Consequently, we suggest to:

Restore and reconvict a purpose to the mission of the Lord's Spiritual, with a clearly defined perspective on their role and proper means of representation **OR** disband them until this consensus is achieved.

Religious Discrimination

Research in the last 10 years has consistently uncovered a dire need for greater funding for unbiased research in the area of discrimination. A review of research on religious discrimination in Britain from 2000 to 2010 concluded that; "This review would therefore certainly agree with Woodhead with Catto (2009: 32) that 'the evidence base on religious discrimination needs to be improved.'" (Weller, 2011).

It is also imperative that following the outcome of any research conducted there is a further definition of Freedom of Religion, to ensure that religious groups and institutions cannot be discriminated against on the basis of belief.

Additionally, it is important that native beliefs can be preserved in the face of the aforementioned societal shifts toward other value systems that either do not fully correlate with typical Western values or are as yet ill-defined in their moral order.

In this respect, we propose that there needs to be greater funding for unbiased research into discrimination on the basis of religion and to review if the 2010 equalities act has successfully upheld its mandate to protect religion as a 'special characteristic'.

Religion and falling suicide rates

Gallup Polls from 2005 and 2006 show that countries that are more religious tend to have lower suicide rates. That this correlation was not to do with income or economic prosperity and was in fact linked to religiosity is an incredible testament to the role faith plays in creating a sense of belonging within society.

Regardless of personal beliefs, if the encouragement of religious sensibilities and community fosters wellbeing and stability among the population, it must be argued that there is room for greater emphasis on the enshrinement of propagation and support for faith communities.

In the following eloquent commentary regarding the English philosopher Scruton, the idea of religion as a necessary coping mechanism for the human predicament is elaborated on more prosaically:

"The Church offered the emotional and moral knowledge to cope with loss itself. He thought that modern culture anaesthetized tragedy, grief, and mourning into banal superficiality, where all is fun and pleasure in a hellish denial of the reality of loss and death. The loss of religion was the loss of loss, he wrote; the *Jubilate Deo* was a reminder that life should be rounded with joy and thankfulness, not resentment at rights unfulfilled. *The Face of God* (2012) and *The Soul of the World* (2014) continued to question what humanity loses when God is effaced from the human condition."
- F. Ward, Church Times

Thus we propose that the government should place more national emphasis on charitable support for church communities and funding for community-based projects. One of the practical reasons for this correlation is the sense of belonging and community that religious groups provide.

Islam in perspective

Islam is growing faster than any other religion. It is significant to note this in a British context because of the large proportion of British Muslims within the Asian community. Further to this, it is important to delicately consider the success of attempted integration between Islam and Western values in Britain and to be aware of the instances where Islam might have been a predominant factor in a lack or absence of social cohesion.

This might relate to self-identity and a sense of belonging. The number of second and third generation migrants to this country who view themselves as 'Muslim first and British second' renders it necessary to have a mature discussion about how communities can properly work together for the benefit of all and not isolate themselves from the culture and social norms of the country in which they now live.

For this to be successful, the label 'Islamophobia' should not be levelled at those who wish to make a careful comparison for the sake of the wellbeing of future generations.

Western nations are generally explicit in their commitment to the pursuit of societal equality. This is particularly true in the case of women's rights. To continue this pursuit, it must be noted that that there is an increasing trend of 'exceptionalism... rooted in religious assertions'.

The case of exceptionalism in Islam is one key consideration on the basis of two points. These two points are marriage and the acceptable treatment of women in the Qur'an. While some explanations can be made due to context in other sources, key passages stand out in a full reading of the Qur'an which must be considered at least to represent something contrary to Western societal norms.

For there to be a real and authentic chance of cultural integration and from the perspective of Western society, these passages must be evaluated in terms of their cultural appropriateness and given fair consideration. If they do not, they must be rejected by those who wish to live according to Western values.

To illustrate the point in this deliberation, there will follow translations of contentious Qur'anic passages relevant to an Islamic understanding of marriage and the permissible treatment of women.

1. Qur'an (4:11) - (on inheritance) "For the male, what is equal to the share of two females" (see also verse 4:176).
2. Qur'an (2:282) - (on court testimony) "And call to witness, from among your men, two witnesses. And if two men be not found then a man and two women. And if two men be not found then a man and two women.
3. Qur'an (2:223) - "Your wives are as a tilth [owned land] unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will... [regarding sexual conduct and ownership of wives]"
4. Qur'an (4:34) - (on disciplining women) "Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them..."
5. Qur'an (4:5) - (on polygamy ration) "And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other]women, two or three or four."
6. Qur'an (4:25) - And whoever among you cannot [find] the means to marry free, believing women, then [he may marry] from those whom your right hand possesses of believing slave girls.

As can be seen, these scriptural verses represent a challenge to the worldview of a society which holds monogamy as the norm and does not condone domestic abuse as a normal disciplinary measure or permit the waiver of a spouse's right to sexual consent. Therefore, it is necessary to respond to this scriptural attitude in a serious attempt to protect women from cultural and religious danger and potential harm.

It is helpful to indicate that in contrast to Islam, within Christianity monogamous marriage is sacred, in Christ's words from the Gospel of Mark (10:6-8):

"But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate."

Violence towards women is condoned nowhere in Christian scripture. Thus, while Christian scripture tends to broadly confirm the legal and societal views on marriage and relationships in this country, the Islamic scripture does not. Regressive and illiberal ideology of this nature cannot continue to be left unaddressed. A significant number of ordinary British communities have been adversely affected by inappropriate and misaligned views towards women.

Following this we propose that it would be highly recommendable to ensure that Islamic schools and Mosques have robust vetting structures in place on education issues, at least pertaining to female equality and marriage practices. The government should not back down from publicly highlighting and upholding the moral preference of native values on these issues, without fearing the unwarranted label of Islamophobia.

Conclusion

With a view to the preservation and enrichment of our national identity, and anchoring of our societal and moral principles, the overall correlation of our social order and ethical values with the Christian tradition needs to be preserved and made clear to all with absolute dedication.

Previous research on the impact of a religious ethic on economic success noted that a religious bent was a prominent factor in the success of Thatcherite economics and recommended that future research took into account the economic influence of religious tendencies, cross-culturally.

The effect of strong Christian leadership has often been noted to coincide with economic and cultural growth in healthy western nations. It is inconceivable that we as a nation could push such important correlations to one side in our pursuit of remaining an economically successful global power. It is in fact necessary to make use of tried and trusted formulas to achieve long term cultural and economic sustainability.

With all considered, it seems very necessary to encourage a revitalization of exploration regarding the importance of the role that Judeo-Christian values play in our society today. The key to maintaining the cultural battle against opposing ideologies is to be transparent and realistic regarding what was most effective in preserving Western Civilization as we know it until now.

Christianity as a structure was for many centuries that cornerstone and its replacement or abandonment from society will be the harbinger for unwanted dissolution, where the societal void can only be filled by ideologies who are diametrically opposed to all that has come before them.

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**MAKING THE CASE FOR SOCIAL CONSERVATISM
AS A SENSIBLE CHOICE FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE**