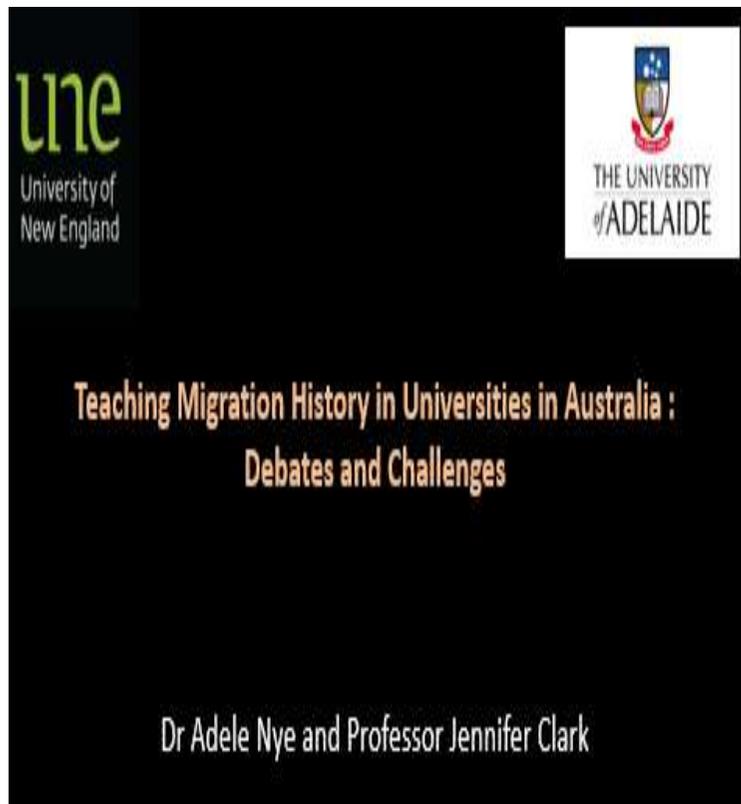


Terry Haydn, University of East Anglia, UK. t. haydn@uea.ac.uk



- **Ethical dilemmas for history educators in the UK (and elsewhere)**

The genesis of this paper:



- **‘The blurred line between teaching and activism....’ (Nye and Clark)**
- The overwhelming majority of history teachers are aware that they should not abuse their privileged position to influence the political views and positions of their students.
- However, as people who have history degrees, and a belief that the study of the past can be of benefit to young people and to society, they have a concern for the accurate representation and ethical use of the past, especially when they are teaching about politically sensitive and contested aspects of the past.

- National curriculum in England: history programmes of study
Published 11 September 2013, page 1.
- Pupils should be taught about ‘the challenges of their time’.
- To what extent is this the case? (i.e. historical perspectives on the most important issues facing the human race in the twenty-first century).

Kenneth Baker, Minister of Education, 1988

The main events that children should know.....



- 'The creation of the church of England under the Tudors; the development of parliament under the Stuarts; the transformation of the world through the industrial revolution; the extension of the franchise to women and young people; the spread of Britain's influence for good across the Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All these things are matters in which we should take pride.'



- **‘There is no better way of building a modern, inclusive, patriotism than by teaching all British citizens to take pride in this country’s historic achievements. Which is why the next Conservative Government will ensure the curriculum teaches the proper narrative of British History - so that every Briton can take pride in this nation’.**

- Michael Gove, Speech to the Conservative Party Conference, 7 October 2010. Online at http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2009/10/Michael_Gove_Failing_schools_need_new_leadership.aspx.

n.b. Not just politicians on the right (and not just politicians – some historians – Abulafia, Biggar)



From 1988, the renationalisation of school history in England: a return to the idea that the primary aim of history in schools is to transmit a positive and celebratory story of the national past to young people.

London Review OF BOOKS

Parodied by British historian Richard Evans as.....

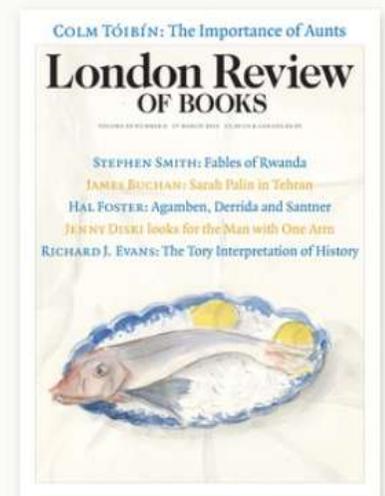
Vol. 33 No. 6 · 17 March 2011

The Wonderfulness of Us (the Tory Interpretation of History)

Richard J. Evans



2166 words



Other recent developments in the UK that impact on history education... 1. 'Fundamental British Values'

- The introduction of the responsibility of all schools and teachers of all subjects to promote 'Fundamental British Values', defined as Democracy, The Rule of Law, Individual liberty, mutual respect for those with different faiths and beliefs, Tolerance. (DfE, 2014)

“Pupils should learn how we became the country we are today and how our values make us a beacon of liberalism, tolerance and fairness.”

‘Schools must teach British values, says head of Ofsted.’ The Independent, 24 September 2017.

<https://edition.independent.co.uk/editions/uk.co.independent.issue.240917/data/7963326/index.html>

The union jack, the Blitz, Dunkirk, 'Britain Alone', beating Germany in WW1 and WW1 (and in 1966)

THE
Sun

| MONEY

| DEAR DEIDRE

| TECH

| TRAVEL

| MOTORS

| PUZZLES

THE Union Jack is to be flown on government buildings every day of the year under plans to celebrate pride in the UK.

Ministers are poised to issue new guidance this week to get the flag on show all year round and not just on designated days.



Another important development.... the amplification effects of social media

- The 'weaponization of history' is not a new phenomenon, as Eric Hobsbawm noted in 2002, 'History is being invented in vast quantities... the world is today full of people inventing histories and lying about history'.
- However, as Simon Schama (2020) notes, **'What we have which has never happened before is the robust existence of a flourishing fantasy world. A world of systematically disseminated untruths and the technology to make those fantasies, conspiracies and untruths instantly, massively and widely available through the internet.'**

The amplification effects of social media

Figure 1: Facebook interactions (reactions, shares, comments) for top publishers, October 2020

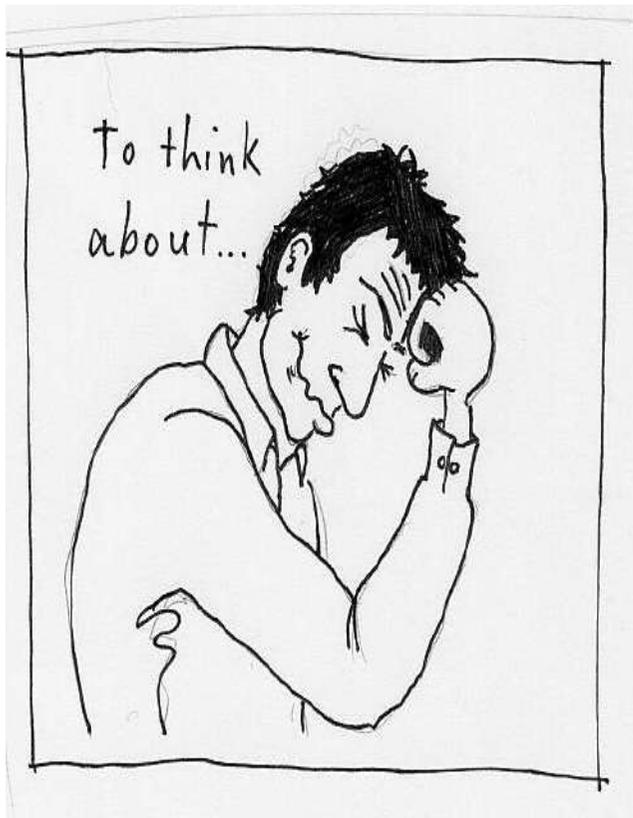
Companies	Individuals - top 10 most engaged link posts)
Fox News 76 million Breitbart 45 million CNN 20 million NBC News 12 million NYT 11 million NPR 10 million MSNBC 9 million Washington Post 7 million New York Post 4 million	1. Franklin Graham (US Evangelical Christian and Donald Trump supporter) 2. Donald Trump 3. Graham 4. Trump 5. Trump 6. Graham 7. Graham 8. Graham 9. Fox News 10. Graham
(See also, Beckett and Wong, 2020).	

Another development: increasing government intervention into the teaching of history



- Accusations of anti-patriotism and threats of legal action (Mountstevens, 2020)
- ‘DfE warns teachers about expressing “political views”’ (Adams, 2018)
- ‘Williamson warns teachers on impartiality’ (Weale, 2020)
- ‘Some universities are pursuing a divisive agenda involving cancelling national heroes... and politicising their curricula’ (Williamson, 2021)
- ‘Schools in England told not to use material from anti-capitalist groups’ Busby, 2020.
- ‘National Trust is under attack because it cares about history, not fantasy’ (Mitchell, 2020).

The history teacher's dilemma



- **How should history teachers and history educators respond in a principled and intelligent way to these developments?**

Some implications of these developments....

Teaching things that go against 'the historical record'

British
Future...

IDENTITY • INTEGRATION • MIGRATION • OPPORTUNITY

HOME ABOUT PUBLICATIONS NEWS BLOG EVENTS VIDEOS YOUR STORIES

Sajid Javid: 'We've welcomed people and it's made us stronger'

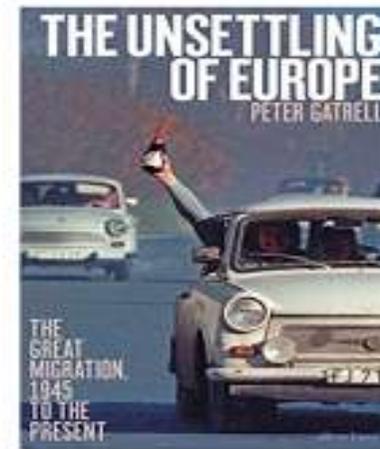
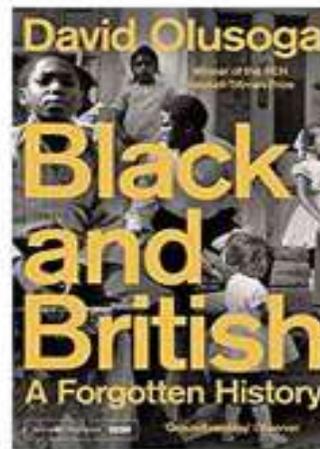
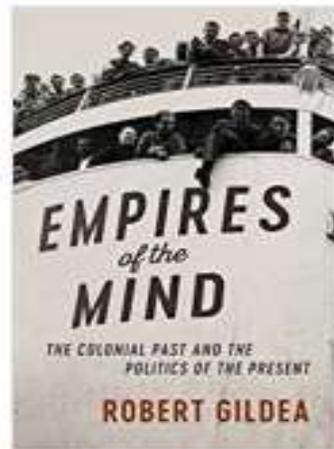
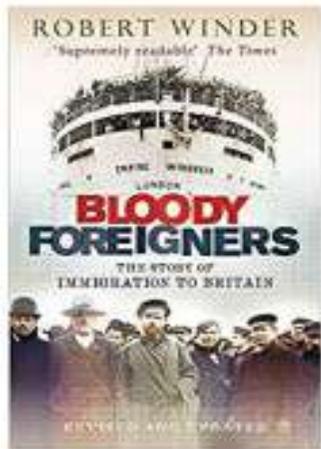
Posted on 6 June 2019



Sam Gymiah, Politics Live, BBC 1, 8 April 2019

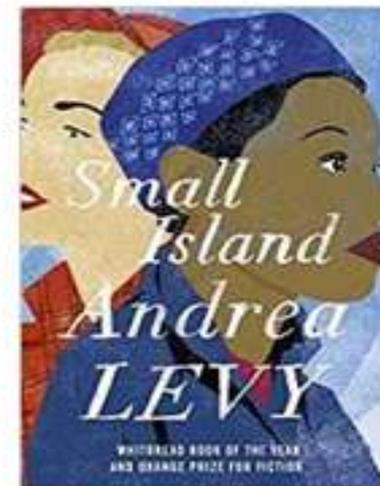
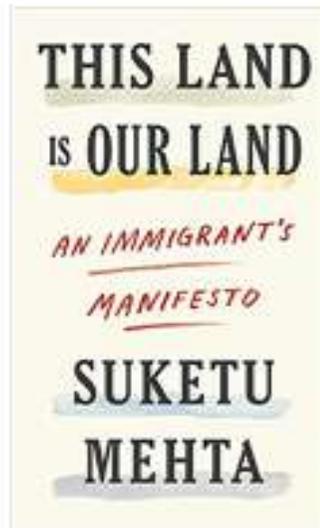


•'The great thing about this country is that it has always been welcoming.'



Our Migration Story 1900-2000s

<https://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/oms/by-era/1900-2000>



This claim is in the face of overwhelming evidence from the historical record that many people in the UK have been hostile to in

A black and white photograph of a handwritten sign. The sign is rectangular and white, with three lines of text written in a dark, hand-drawn font. The text reads: "NO IRISH", "NO BLACKS", and "NO DOGS.". The sign is placed on a dark background with a repeating pattern of light-colored zig-zag lines and small, stylized floral or star-like motifs. The overall image has a grainy, high-contrast quality.

NO IRISH
NO BLACKS
NO DOGS.



James Mehille
@JamesMehille

I've absolutely no idea where all the extremist hatred comes from.



The long read

Immigration panic: how the west fell for manufactured rage

From Trump to Corbyn, politicians are winning votes by stoking age-old hatreds. Where does this fear of migrants come from?

By Saketu Mehta

Thu 27 Aug 2015



467

The west is being destroyed, not by migrants, but by the fear of migrants. In countries after country, the ghosts of the fascists have re-materialised and are sitting in parliaments in Germany, in Austria, in Italy. They have successfully convinced their population that the greatest threat to their nations isn't government tyranny or inequality or climate change, but immigration. And that, to stop this wave of migrants, everyone's civil liberties must be curtailed. Surveillance cameras must be installed everywhere. Passports must be produced for the most routine of tasks, like buying a mobile phone.

Brexit

Rowena Mason
Political correspondent

Fri 20 May 2016

13,000 EST



465 3,057



This article is more than 3 years old

Gove: EU immigrant influx will make NHS unsustainable by 2030

Justice secretary says population the size of Scotland could arrive from Turkey and other potential new EU countries by 2030



A more interesting and relevant historical enquiry question would be to get students to think about how public attitudes to immigrants have been shaped over time and why some politicians and media owners/newspapers have attempted to demonise immigrants and others.

How do we handle the 'bad history' (untrue, manipulative) that is 'out there'? (whether promulgated by politicians, the media, hate groups, social media?)



- Daniel Kawczynski, the Conservative representative for Shrewsbury, claimed Britain received no money from the Marshall Plan, American payments of more than \$12bn agreed in 1948 to help rebuild Europe.
- (Britain received about 20% of the money, more than any other country – BBC News, 4 Feb, 2019)

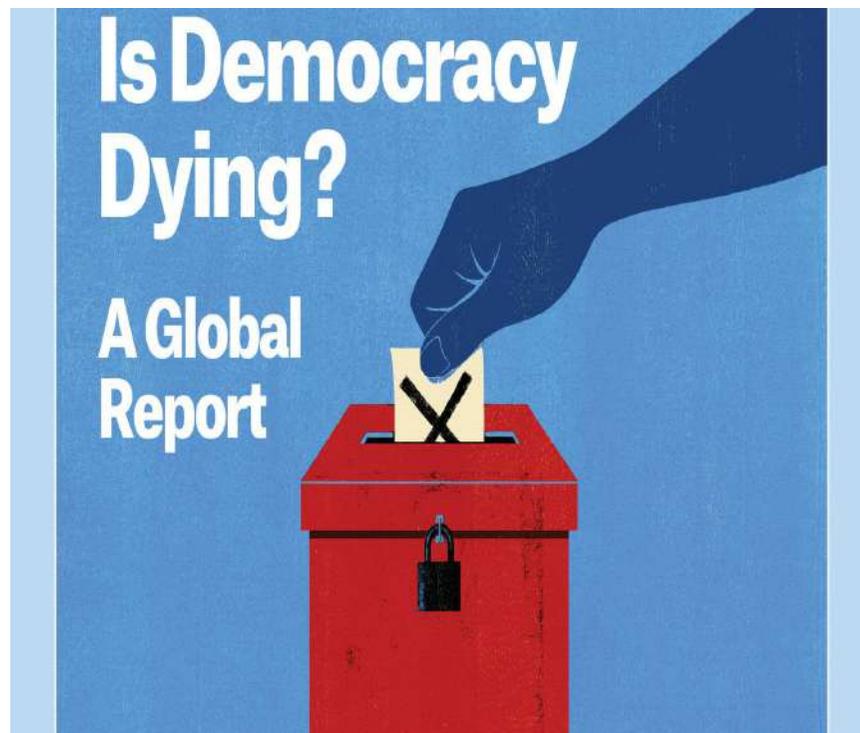
One of many examples of politicians (and newspapers) not presenting an accurate version of the past



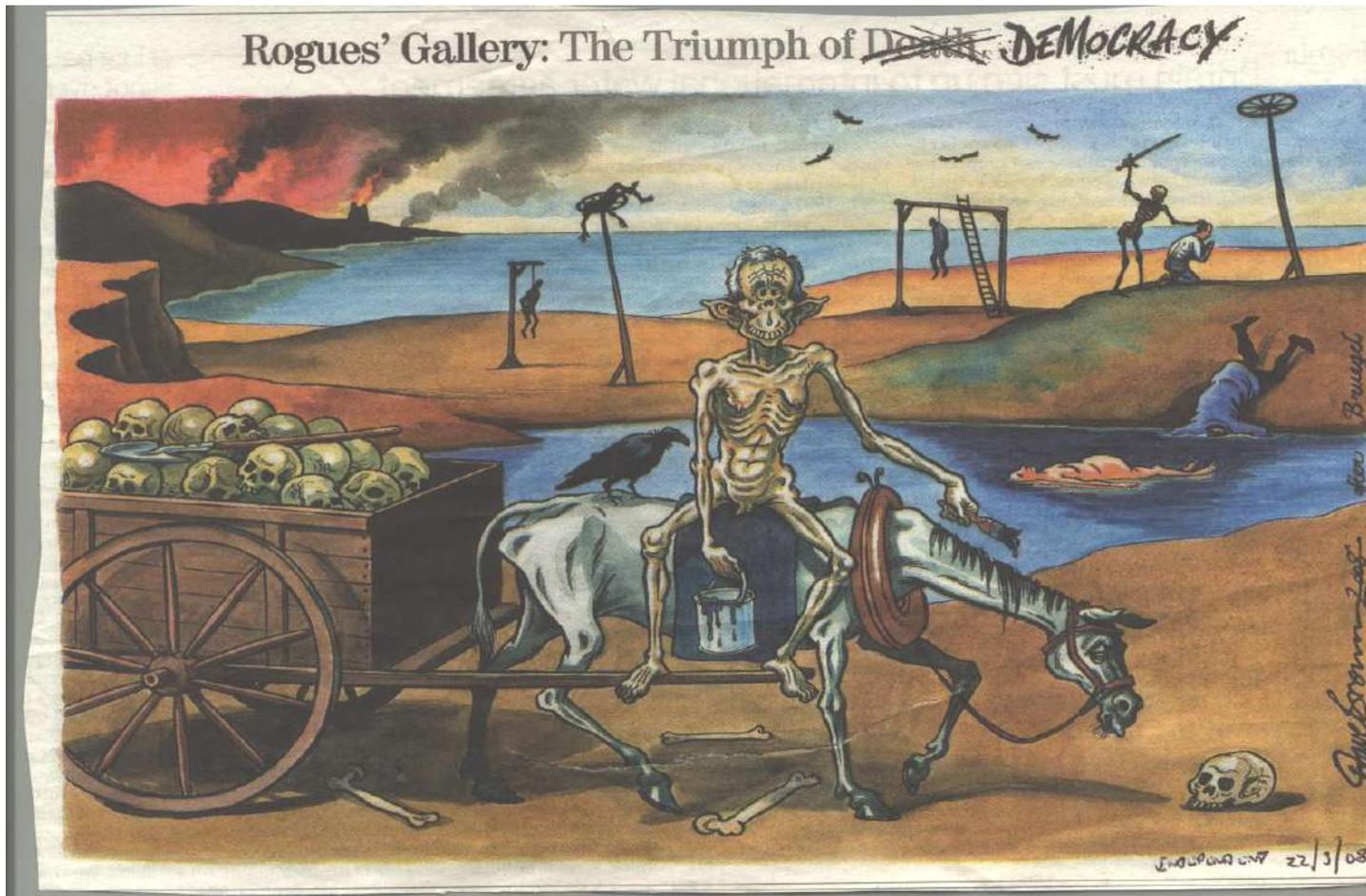
And how do we handle the issue that many powerful, influential (and well-educated) people distort history for unethical purposes, including stirring up hatred and fear of outsider groups?



- So what do we teach young people about democracy?

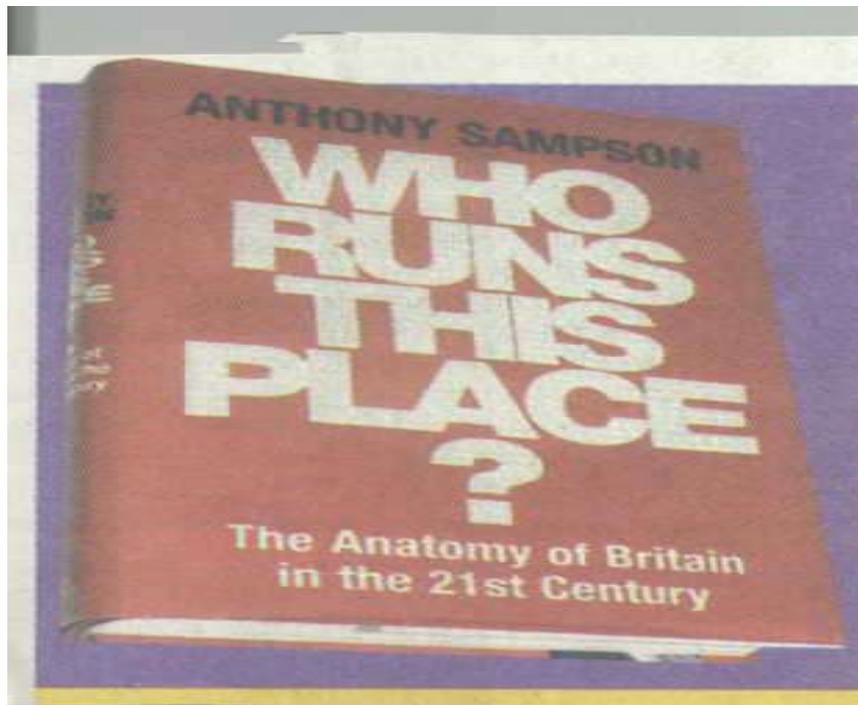


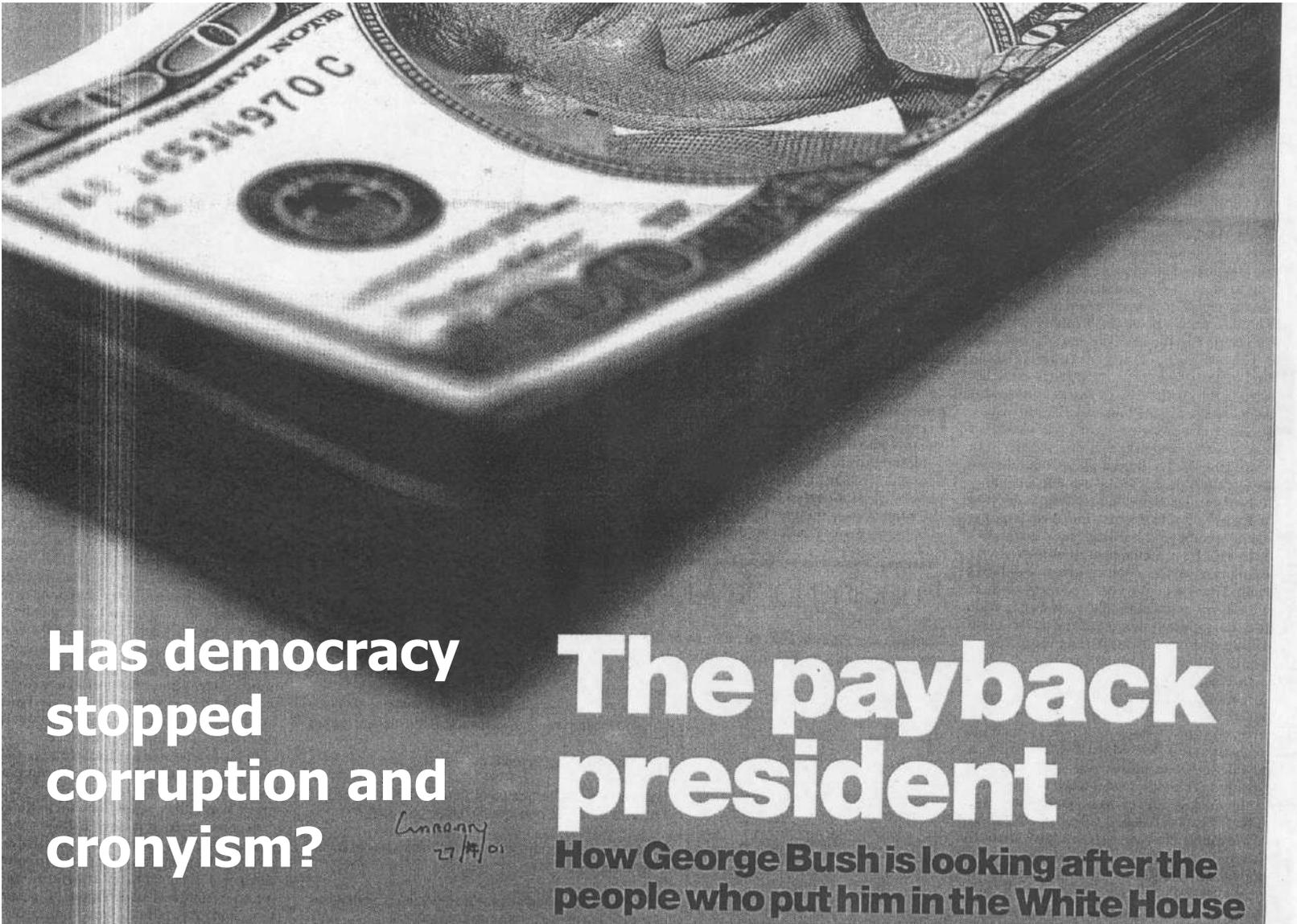
- The history of democracy part 2: what happened *after* people in the UK (and elsewhere) got the vote?



Has democracy stopped wars?

Has democracy increased social mobility?





**Has democracy
stopped
corruption and
cronyism?**

*Lincoln
27/11/01*

The payback president

**How George Bush is looking after the
people who put him in the White House**



(‘Only the little people pay taxes’)

Has democracy brought about a more equal society?

We have to be careful here.....

3 = 2

Guardian 26 July 1997, "The Questionnaire"

Question: "What is the most important lesson life has taught you?"

Malcolm Bradbury:

"That the greatest human fortune is to live in a liberal democracy"

WPA - SLATER

(PUPILS SHOULD WORK THAT OUT FOR THEMSELVES, PARTLY THROUGH THE STUDY OF HISTORY, RATHER THAN BEING TOLD THAT IT IS SO.)

A short history of capitalism's rise and fall

It has been defined by long periods of growth, followed by convulsions induced mainly by financial crisis. 2008 has all the hallmarks of another such trauma. Will Hutton looks at our economic system's ups and downs

Will Hutton

Sun 5 Oct 2008 00.01
BST



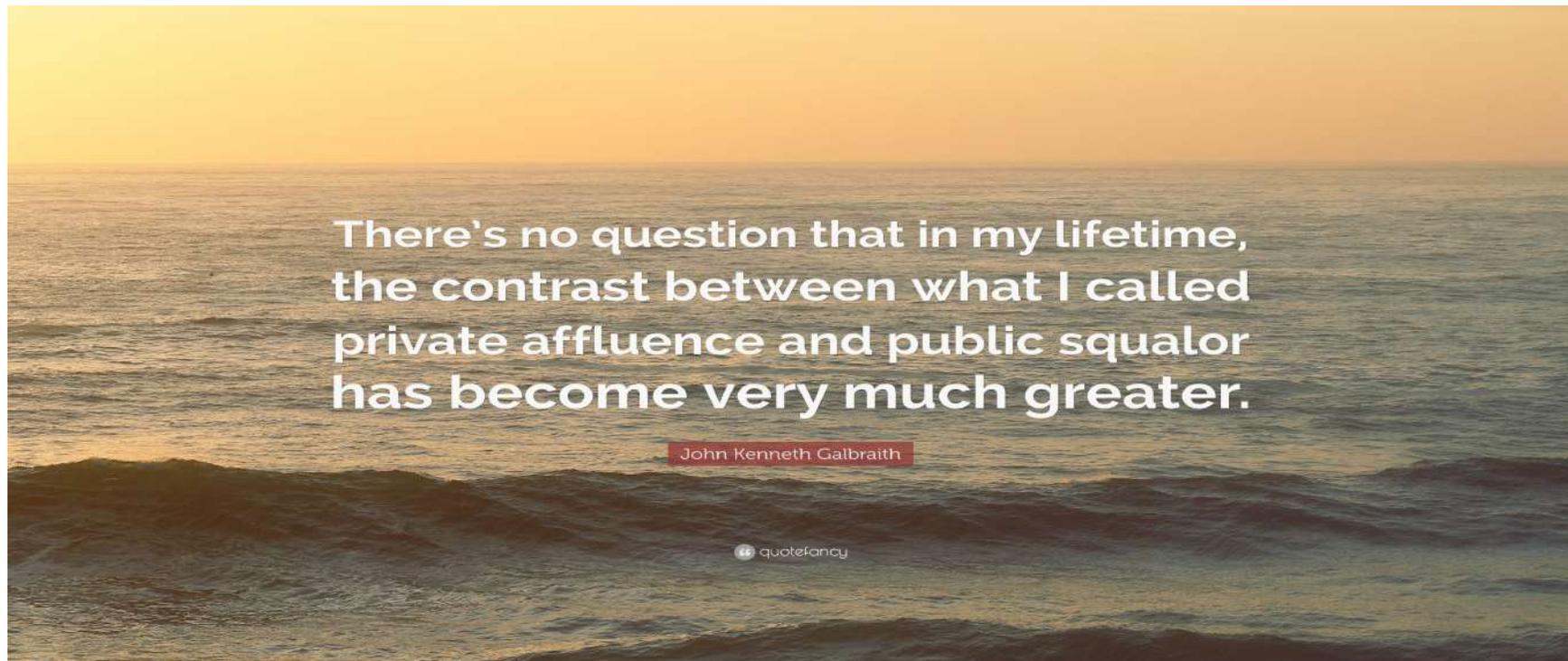
Stage one: 1899-1929 **The capitalism of modernity**

In 1899, the economy, still reliant on horse, wind and steam power, would still just have been recognisable to a Greek or Roman; by 1929 the modern age had been launched. Over 30 years the automobile, the aeroplane, the radio, the skyscraper, the ocean liner and a whole range of domestic electrical appliances emerged as astonishing new artefacts. Modernity had been launched. Although from 1914 Europe was to be mired in war and

It's complicated: capitalism has evolved over many years and has operated in different ways with different effects on various sections of the population

As with democracy, capitalism is not perfect, it has its problems. Don't students need to know about these complexities?

J.K. Galbraith.....



Shouldn't students be educated about changes to capitalism in the Reagan/Thatcher era and the outcomes of 'deregulation'?

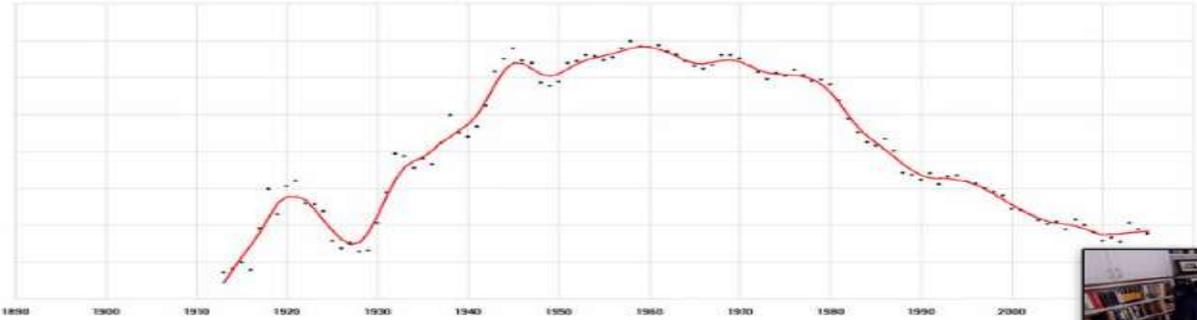
Robert Puttnam....

 **Tweet**

 **Centre for Ed Policy & Equalising Opportunities @CEPEO_UCL · 13h** 

Economic [#equality](#) in the US over a century - when an image says a thousand words... [@RobertDPutnam](#) at [#cepeolaunch](#) reporting on his new book "The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again" More spr.ly/6011GSf7N

Economic Equality, 1913-2015



Year	Economic Equality Index (approximate)
1913	1.5
1920	2.5
1930	1.8
1940	3.5
1950	4.5
1960	4.8
1970	4.5
1980	3.5
1990	2.5
2000	2.0
2015	2.2

  6  4 

 Robert Putnam and Bob Putnam



But again, we have to be careful....

Students need to understand that alternatives to capitalism have not gone well.

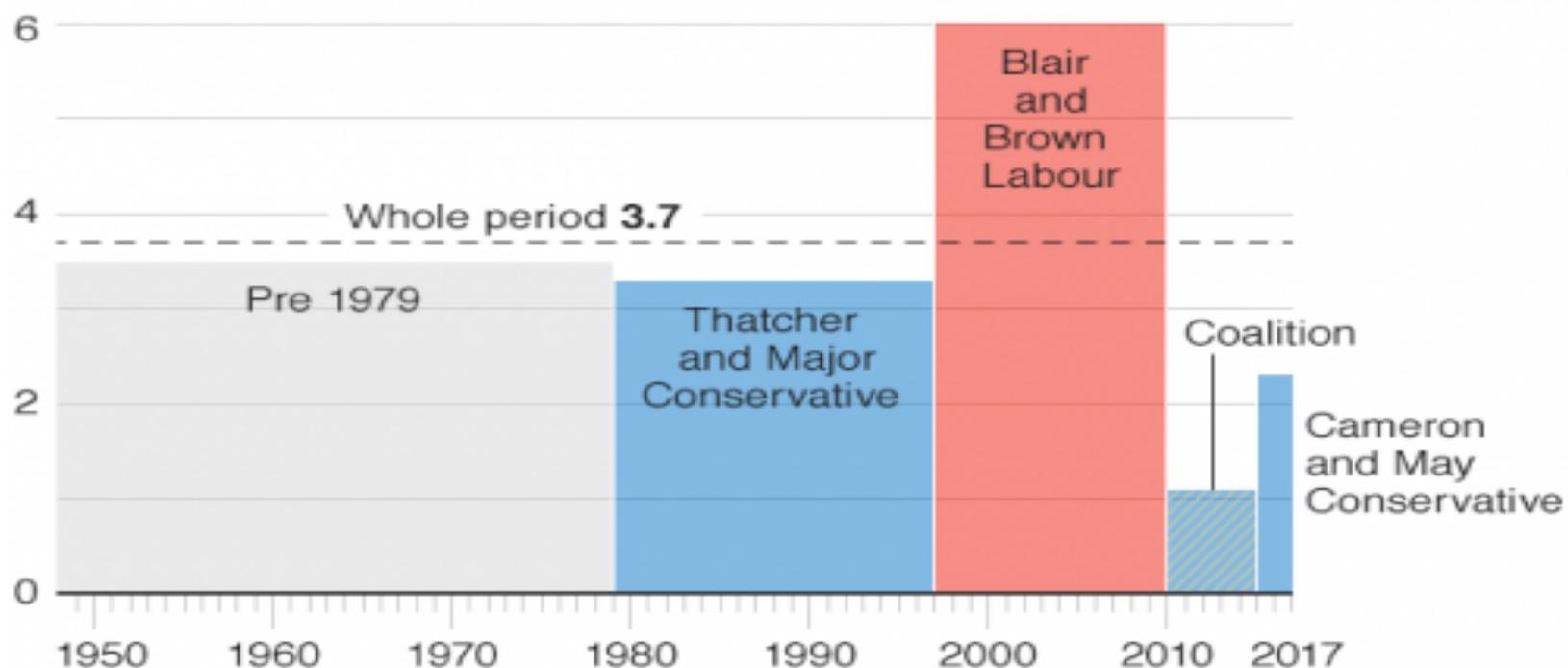




- **What do we teach young people about the history of the National Health Service (a very important part of British history)?**

Health spending by different governments

Average annual real growth rate (%)



Source: IFS / Health Foundation

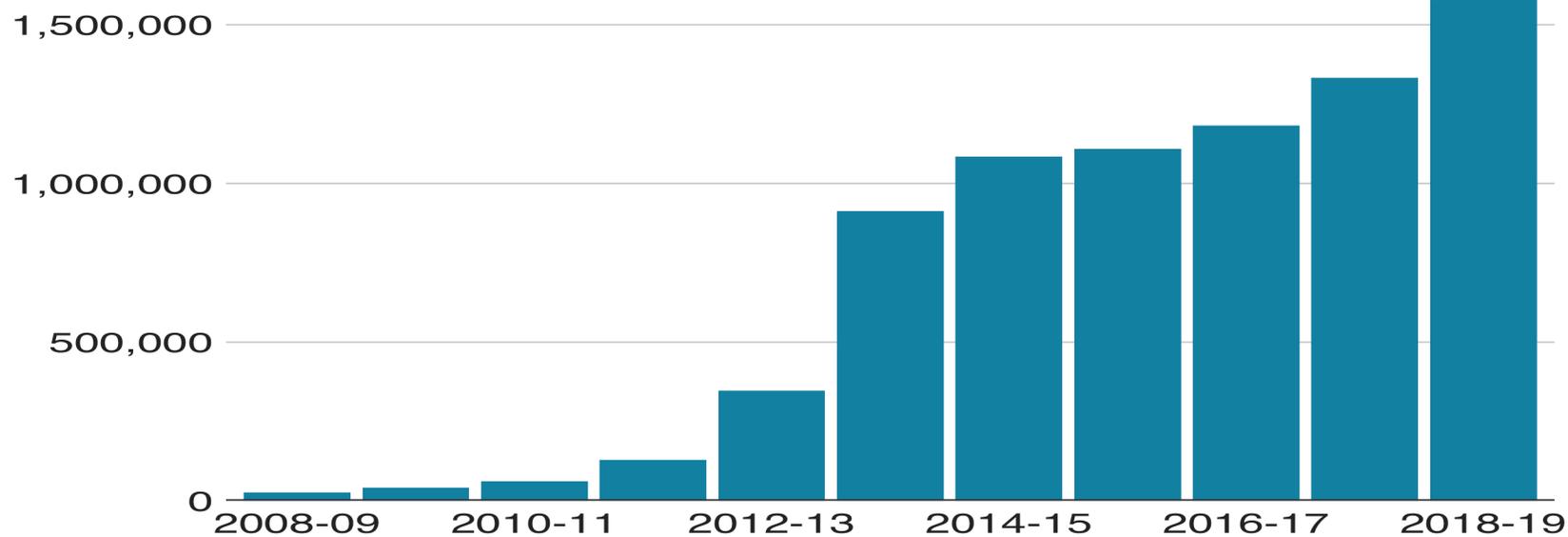
BBC

Again... the need for caution/balance...?

- The moves to privatise parts of the NHS were initiated by the Tony Blair Labour government.
- The founder of the NHS, Nye Bevan, believed that the funding required to provide free treatment for all would reduce as the 'backlog' of illness and disease was addressed. Advances in medical knowledge and technology meant that this did not happen and that the costs of the NHS increased quite dramatically.

What about poverty and inequality? Other 'persistent issues' in history
And the difficult/uncomfortable issues it presents for politicians when
'the national story'/historical record is no longer a progress narrative

Number of emergency food supplies handed out by Trussell Trust food banks



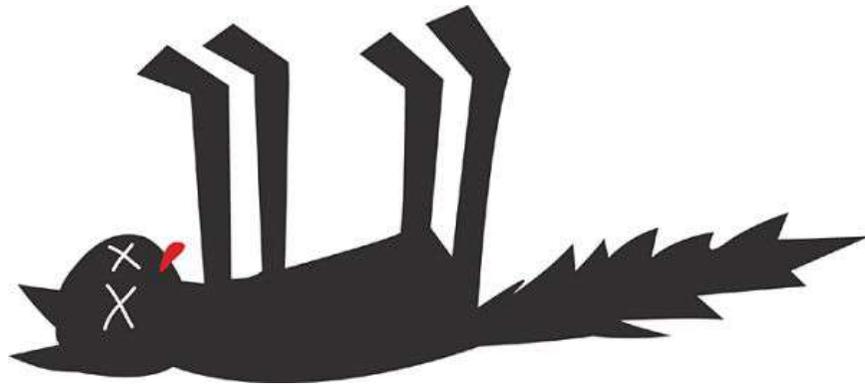
Source: Trussell Trust

BBC

‘There are those who feel comfortable about teaching history, as long as it remains firmly about the past’ (Carmel Gallagher, 2002)

- It is worth noting that politicians have been keen to limit the ‘end date’ for school history.
- Ken Clarke initially wanted school history to stop at the end of World War Two, eventually, there was a compromise and the ‘20 year rule’ was adopted (School history to stop twenty years before the present).
- In Michael Gove’s draft 2013 National Curriculum for history, the end dates were to be Margaret Thatcher’s accession to power in 1979, and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

School history as a form of 'deadcatting'?



- If students are taught about the issues on Kenneth Baker and Michael Gove's lists of content, this means that they are not thinking or learning about 'the challenges of their times' – which are quite difficult issues for politicians when there is no longer a 'progress narrative' (things are getting better) to tell.

Davos 2019

Understanding 'diversion'

Martin Farrer

Wed 30 Jan 2019
05.04 GMT



8289

School history as a diversion from teaching students about 'the challenges of their times'?

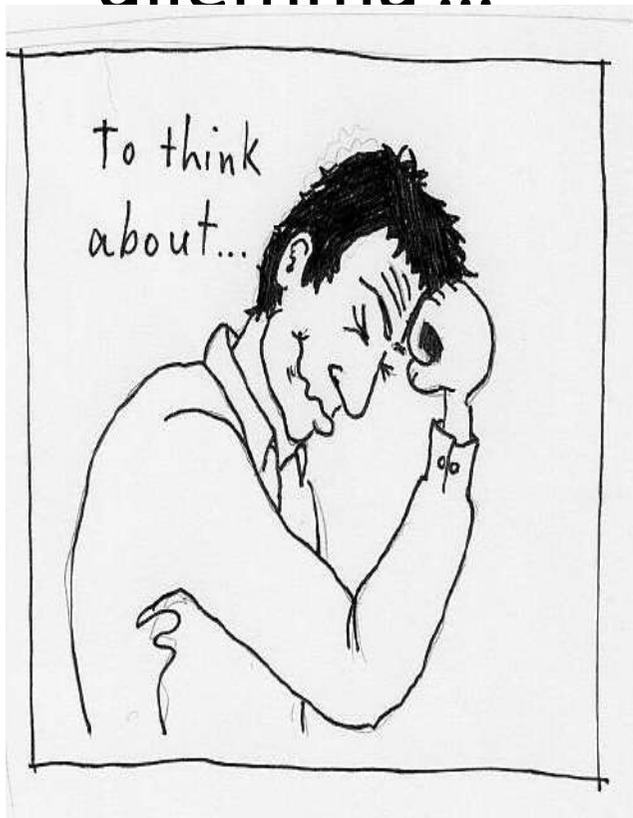
This article is more than 6 months old

Historian berates billionaires at Davos over tax avoidance

Rutger Bregman tells panel that the real issue is the rich not paying their fair share



So, to come back to 'the history teacher's dilemma'...

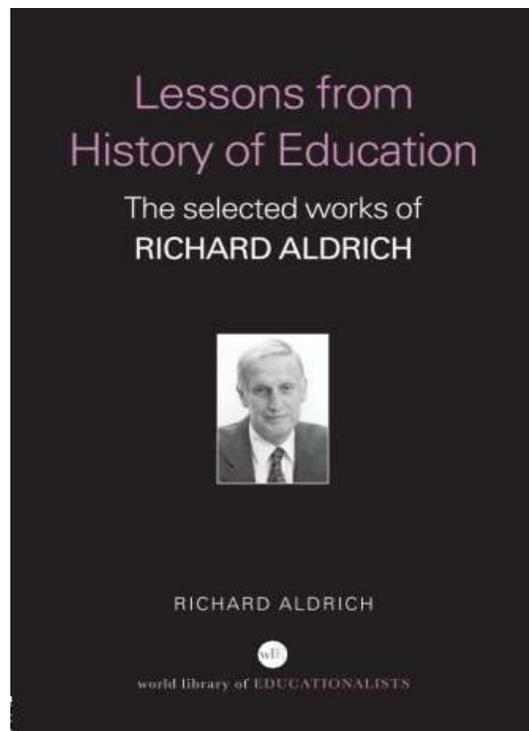


- **How should history teachers and history educators respond in a principled and intelligent way to these developments?**

1. Always keeping in mind....

- **What does the historical record say?**
- **(i.e. directing them to 'respectable' history and explaining what makes it 'good history'.**

2. Explaining to students that 'truth' (in the sense of trying to put forward the most accurate version of the past from the evidence available) is an important part of the discipline of history



- Aldrich (2003) argued that historians of education, in common with all historians, have three duties -to the people of the past, to the people of the present, and to truth.

3. Teaching students the importance of truth as a civic virtue (Sen, 2009)

- ‘Practical wisdom or the capacity or predisposition to act truthfully and with reason in matters of deliberation, thus with a strong ethical component’ (Aristotle, quoted in Oancea and Furlong 2007).

4. Teaching students that lies about history often have consequences (The stab in the back legend, 'The great replacement'...



Exxon's climate lie: 'No corporation has ever done anything this big or bad'

Bill McKibben And, perhaps the most consequential lie in human history.....

The truth of Exxon's complicity in global warming must to be told - how they knew about climate change decades ago but chose to help kill our planet



By 1978 Exxon's senior scientists were telling top management that climate change was real, caused by man, and would raise global temperatures by 2-3C. Photograph: Pat Sullivan/AP

5. Educating students about unethical and manipulative versions of the past

The need to educate students about how and why ‘bad history’ is created, what games are being played with the past, how bad history is made plausible, ‘how it works’.

This means teaching about all the forms of history that are in the public domain. We should not limit our teaching to formal, ‘academy/text book/TV history’. They need to be exposed to the bad history that is out there

6. Developing students' digital and information literacy

• How many pupils leave school understanding the meaning of words like...

- Outsider group
- Playing the race card
- The manufacture of consent
- Populism
- Demagogue
- Polemic
- Astroturfing
- Dead-catting/Diversion
- Exceptionalism
- Xenophobia

Astroturfing: what it is and why it matters' Adam Bienkov, The Guardian, 8 Feb 2012, online at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/feb/08/what-is-astroturfing>

7. Teaching
students
about the
complexity
of history

Churchill's legacy leaves Indians questioning his hero status

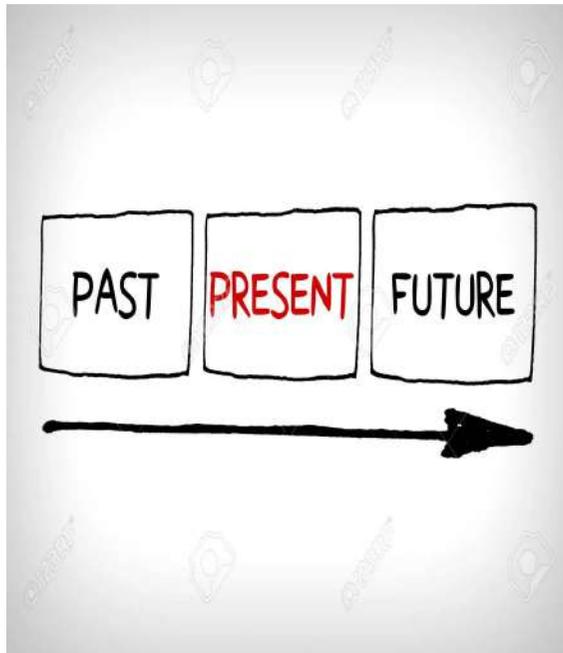
By Yogita Limaye
BBC News correspondent, India

© 21 July 2020



There are perhaps better questions to ask than 'Churchill, hero or villain?', and 'Was the British Empire good or bad?'

If school history is to be of use to students and to society, it must make connections between the past, the present, and possible futures.



- 'There is no evidence that school pupils translate their knowledge of the past into an understanding of the present unless the past is explicitly related to current circumstances.'
- Slater, J., (1995) Teaching History in the New Europe, p. 146.
- 'School history provides a framework for pupils to discuss polemical and contentious issues within academic canons of reliability, explanation and justification.'
- Husbands, C. (1996) What is history teaching?, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- (A collection of quotations which provide an ethical and intellectual 'warrant' for linking the past to present concerns and events, and speculating on possible futures can be found at <https://bit.ly/3J4IVQm>)

‘Public memory does not commit itself to the task of recalling events in an objective, disinterested manner but with great prejudice. People sift through the available facts, refract them through their own perspective and then arrange them in their own self-interest. The result is several versions of events, never settled but highly partial and always contested – constantly vying for hegemony, authenticity and credibility’ (Younge, 2013: 27).

‘If only there was a subject which sought to discover the truth about things that have happened. Where students are taught to critically evaluate different, opposing narratives for trustworthiness, to seek evidence, to gain wisdom from previous example.’ (Snow, 2021).



- So who should we trust to be ‘the guardians’ of history teaching in schools - to ensure that history is taught in a way that will be of optimal benefit to young people and to society? (And is accurate and grounded in the historical record?)

(Elected) politicians and governments?



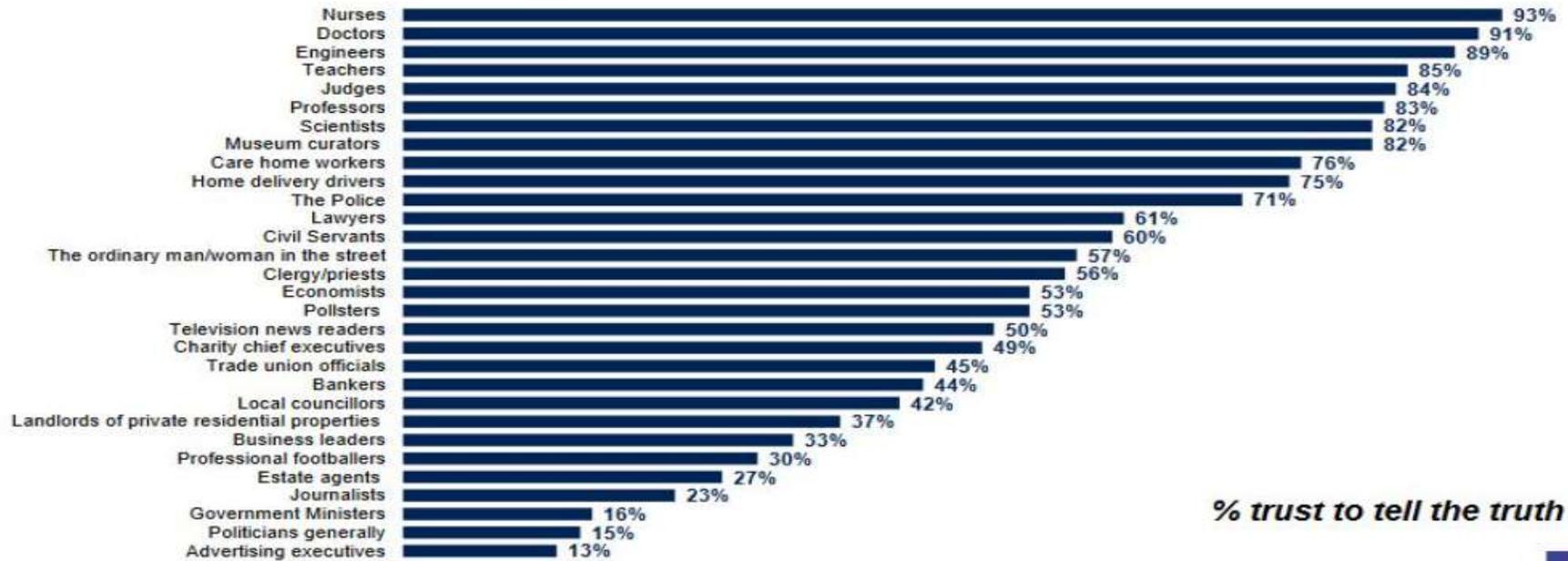
(What mark out of 10 would you give these people in terms of their integrity, respect for truth, and respect for the common good?)

Or media oligarchs and their journalists?



Veracity Index 2020 – all professions

“Now I will read you a list of different types of people. For each would you tell me if you generally trust them to tell the truth, or not?”



Base: 957 and 916 British adults aged 18+, interviewed by telephone 9 – 18 and 16 – 25 October 2020
 © Ipsos | Veracity Index 2020 | November 2020 | Version 1 | Public



Public trust in teachers – 89%
Public trust in politicians generally – 15%
Public trust in government ministers -16% Journalists – 23%
 (‘Tell me if you generally trust them to tell the truth or not’ - Ipsos MORI poll, 2020)

Why this is important

SOURCE: Slate

2-10-17

Third Reich historian Richard Evans worries the similarities between the 1930s and now are too close for comfort

Related Link ["We have at most a year to defend American democracy, perhaps less" –](#)

Yale's Timothy Snyder