**Whatever Happened to Our Dreams of Liberalism?**

Liberalism, once the shining force behind Western democracy and global progress, now finds itself in a state of disrepair. It's like that beloved cardigan we once wore proudly—it stood for rationality, order, and fairness, but now it looks tired, threadbare, and borderline embarrassing to wear outside. It's not just an old-fashioned fashion statement but an ideological crisis.

The world we inhabit in 2025 bears little resemblance to the one we envisioned in the Blair years, when politics had a sheen of optimism. Tony Blair strode across the global stage with the calm confidence of a leading man in a Richard Curtis rom-com, promising "Cool Britannia" and an ever-brighter future.

However, what happened to that dream? Where did we go wrong? The curtain on that vision fell long ago, and what followed was less Love Actually and more The End of the World as We Know It, with a soundtrack by Adam Curtis. Curtis, whose documentaries often explore the collapse of grand political ideas, would surely view the rise of populism and the election of Donald Trump for a second term in 2024 as yet another sign that the liberal order has run its course. Gone are the days of believing in the gentle optimism of Notting Hill, replaced by the harsh realities of America First, a global power vacuum, and a culture of suspicion and division. If Blair's version of Britain was a sunlit romantic comedy, today's world feels more like a dystopian nightmare crafted by Curtis—endless confusion, fractured ideologies, and political chaos on repeat.

Take Trump's re-election in 2024. A result that might have seemed absurd just a few years ago now feels too real. His second-term victory was not just about one man's return to power but the culmination of a fracturing liberal order. America, once a beacon of democracy and liberal ideals, now lurches under a president who governs like a reality TV star, thriving on chaos, misinformation, and authoritarian-style governance. His re-election was a symbolic rejection of the liberal values that once dominated the West. After all, what could be more antithetical to liberalism than a leader who dismisses facts, defies democratic norms, and embraces populist theatrics?

Meanwhile, the rest of the world is not faring much better. China, under the ever-strong grip of Xi Jinping, continues to assert its global dominance. Through its Belt and Road Initiative, China has invested heavily in infrastructure across Africa, Asia, and parts of Europe. It offers an alternative to the liberal model that once defined global politics. As liberal democracies remain preoccupied with internal chaos—fake news, populist uprisings, and disillusionment—China quietly builds roads and railways, forging strategic partnerships with a clarity of purpose that liberalism seems to lack.

Back home, the fallout of Brexit offers a fitting metaphor for the collapse of liberal ideals in the UK. The United Kingdom, once the proud architect of democracy and human rights, now grapples with its post-EU identity in a way that Bridget Jones could only capture—a comedy of errors in which the British electorate has stumbled through questionable decisions and ill-fated political flings. Brexit, that absurd and self-destructive decision to leave the European Union, has left the nation in a state of political paralysis. We are left with a government that manages to be both clueless and defensive, wrapped in a blanket of bluster and half-hearted attempts at reconciliation. It is a political landscape where the "blue soup" of public opinion, once a smooth blend of ideas, now bubbles over with inflation, a cost-of-living crisis, and an increasingly fragile sense of national unity.

Moreover, who could forget the Coalition of 2010? It was a political marriage between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats that never quite fit, much like a bad joke no one could stop telling. In his ill-fitting hotpants, Vince Cable tried in vain to hold things together, fully aware that the partnership was as uncomfortable as David Cameron pretending not to be an Etonian. If that was not the visual metaphor for the death of British liberalism, I do not know what is. Vince Cable in hotpants. Enough said.

In 2025, liberalism's promises of a better, more inclusive world have faded into the ether. Populism is on the rise, authoritarian regimes are emboldened, and the grand vision of global cooperation and progressive values seems lost. Nations bicker, trade agreements crumble, and the rich continue to grow wealthier while the rest of us try to figure out how to survive another week of rising costs. Trump's second term is no answer to these problems—it only compounds them. The dream of liberalism, once so vibrant, is now a tragic comedy where the actors know the script is broken, but no one is willing to rewrite it.

So, what is left? In this world, liberalism is like the last person at the party still trying to convince themselves that there is a happy ending ahead. It is the idealist clinging to the idea of progress, staring at the pile of takeaway containers (leftover from the promises of global justice and equality), wondering where it all went wrong. Where are those grand ideals now? Perhaps they got lost somewhere in the economic shuffle, buried under headlines about climate change denial, Brexit fallout, and the erosion of public trust in institutions.

If liberalism is ever to make a comeback, it will need more than good speeches and catchy slogans. It needs to rediscover its sense of purpose—its ability to listen to the people it claims to serve rather than just congratulating itself on its theoretical ideals. The liberalism we once believed in was about progress, fairness, and inclusivity. However, in its current form, it has become a relic of a bygone era—like that once-proud cardigan, threadbare and ill-fitting for the times we now face.

The future, it seems, belongs to those who can get things done—authoritarian regimes or populist leaders who understand that in a world like this, it is not enough to be right. You have to grab the microphone, perform the role of leader, and act like you know what you are doing—even if you don't.

If liberalism is to survive meaningfully, it must accept its current failings, adapt to the changing world, and understand that self-congratulation won't save it. The world has moved on. The question is: Will liberalism be able to catch up, or will it remain the faded star of a long-forgotten movie?