

The Adam Smith Institute is suggesting the UK needs mor...

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Thanks to Jolyon Maugham and '[Nearly Legal](#)' my attention has been drawn to the winning article in 18-121 category of the Adam Smith Institute 'Young Writer on Liberty' competition. This is by someone called Theo Clifford. [His argument](#) is that the UK's housing problem comes down to the fact that:

Britain needs more slums

Yes, you read that right. One of the UK's leading right wing think tanks, much beloved of Margaret Thatcher, has published an article (and let's ignore the author's age; it is of no consequence) that suggests that the UK's housing problem demands that:

Sweeping deregulation is the only way to provide Britain with the slums it is crying out for.

And how does he define these slums? They are housing that:

in the eyes of local authorities ... are too small, or too tall, or the ceilings are too low, or the windows not energy efficient enough.

No doubt they also lack proper fire exits, have dubious sanitation, are built of asbestos, aren't watertight, are wired by cowboys, have gas fittings that have not been checked and much else too.

So, the Right's answer to the wealth inequality that is preventing young people accessing housing is not to tax land, or property gains, or to introduce a land value tax, or address the issue of empty houses and undeveloped land, or indeed to have the state use its capacity to build infrastructure using ideas like [People's Quantitative Easing](#), but is instead to permit slums and all the abuse, including that by unscrupulous landlords that always goes with them.

When it comes to a particular sort of poverty, whether it be of thinking or aspiration, you have to admit that the Right really does corner the field, and what is shocking is that the Adam Smith Institute now thinks it is possible to publish articles in support of

[Rachmanism.](#)

[Cathy come home](#), is all I can say in response.