

The future of blogging

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I have been thinking quite a bit about blogging in the last few days. One reason will become apparent this week, but it's a bit prosaic compared the more existential issue that has been troubling me the most. That is whether blogging in the way that I do it is something that will be possible in the future.

It is more than a decade ago now that John Christensen of the Tax Justice Network and I identified fascism as the biggest potential threat we faced. I wish that prospect did not seem more likely now than it did then, but I have to admit that it does. When Hungary and Poland are both cracking down on free speech and removing the right of their elected oppositions whilst Turkey is actively suppressing any potential criticism of its President you realise that there is something deeply pernicious going on. And these things have a habit of spreading.

And it is already not just in those places. We all know the loss of freedom that we have suffered in the UK over that intervening period. There has been the gagging law. Trade union rights have been diminished, considerably. In many places in the UK it is now illegal for three people to meet together in public without prior permission under devolved powers now used by many local authorities. Libel law has supposedly been reformed; I have not been noticing anybody celebrating. The right of free expression, traditionally enjoyed by the UK's academics, appears to be at risk. And that is by no means all the threats that have arisen.

Now we have senior politicians [saying they do not value the opinions of experts](#). Such comments can lead to other things.

And we know that access to publish on the internet might in the future be much more heavily dependent upon ability to pay for access.

I do seriously wonder as a result whether I have been living through the best years of blogging, without realising it. That they might have coincided with the last years of something approximating to free speech might be an uncomfortable truth.

I sincerely hope I am wrong. But the way politics is going in some countries at the time that the chance of a major shift towards right wing populism in the UK seems very real indeed does worry me, greatly.

And I wonder what my response should be. And how, and on what, I should blog as a result given my concern for poverty, equality, opportunity, choice and democracy. I put the question out there. Comments welcome.