

The left needs to stop tilting at windmills and embrace...

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Two articles have struck me this morning. One is in the [Guardian](#), by regular commentator John Harris. The headline in this article says most of what you need to know:

Labour is stuck in the last century. Its adversaries have seized the future

He is right.

He even manages, in one sentence, to explain how Marxism Today moved to them quite far right (it's all down to the key role of the bourgeoisie in the process of change, and he manages to not use the term).

Harris clearly thinks Labour is tilting at windmills.

The other article is about renewable energy. But windmills aren't the link. In [the FT](#) **Prof Nick Butler has appeared to have come across the quite shocking idea that the European Green Deal is intent on changing European energy policy. It would appear that he finds this state intervention shocking, and terribly EU in style. He even describes it as being absent of innovation. It's an article as lacking as foresight as too many in Labour are in Harris' view: both view a 2020 problem viewed through a decidedly 20th century lens. Why the FT published the article is anyone's guess.**

There is, of course, a reason for linking the two pieces. Labour is in a time warp, dedicated to a type of campaigning that fits a social and industrial structure within society that no longer exists. Butler clearly wants a 1980s open market based solution to what he appears to reluctantly think might be a problem, to which he apparently thinks the state has no answer when it comes to allocating capital.

And there is the point of reconciliation. In 2029 the state has a decided role to play. The authors of The Green Swan, [to which I referred yesterday](#), have recognised it. What is going to have to happen is that the state must adopt a

new and profound role to tackle the allocation of capital required to manage climate change. It has to allocate limited capital to address the issues arising because there is too great an uncertainty for markets to do so. And the state has to also address the consequences of decommissioning capital. And it has to address the considerable risks arising from redistribution of wealth, income and other resources that arise from both.

This is a real issue. The only windmills involved will be doing a valuable job for us all.

And the management of the tasks involved requires a new political vision.

The questions arising are not just about class, although there will be class implications. The questions are about survival, of us all. There may have never been a greater natural leveller.

This is what the left has to be about now.

The right is pursuing individualism as a political path to popularity. But that is quite emphatically not a route to the required answers. Only tackling climate will provide any answers now.

The question is, can the left get its head around this? The evidence is far from clear as yet.