

Blair is claiming TINA. I am sure there is TIARA

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Tony Blair has [published a 5,600-word essay](#) through the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change this morning, which is being presented across the right-wing and mainstream media (is there a difference?) as a warning to Labour about moving left. That, though, is to misrepresent what Blair is saying. This is a blatant and desperate attempt to revive the neoliberal centre by dressing it up as realism for the age of AI.

I [commented here, only yesterday](#), on the Thatcherite term TINA - there is no alternative- and suggested that there is in the form of TIARA - there is a real alternative. Blair remains in full denial of that fact. His article is full-on TINA.

Blair's core argument is straightforward. He says Britain is entering an era of immense disruption driven by artificial intelligence, geopolitical fragmentation, declining Western dominance, climate pressures, demographic change and a new global economic order. He argues that politics as we have known it is becoming obsolete, and claims Labour has no coherent response to this transformation.

So far, so good, then, even down to Labour having no answer to those things, because it very clearly has not. What Blair does not notice is that this is because neoliberal politics - of the sort he and Bill Clinton helped create - is not designed to have those answers. Its whole purpose is not to answer questions, but to suggest that these may be found in the market.

Implicitly accepting this point, according to Blair, Labour's instinctive response to political difficulty is to retreat into what he calls the comfort zone of centre-left politics by suggesting:

- * more or better social security,
- * more regulation,
- * higher taxes, especially on wealth,
- * stronger labour rights,

- * scepticism about business, and
- * attachment to environmental targets that, in his view, damage competitiveness.

Or to govern in the interests of people, in other words. He thinks this is electorally dangerous and economically self-defeating.

The essay instead advocates what Blair still laughably calls the radical centre. In practice, it would seem that this would mean accepting that growth is always and unarguably good, whatever the consequences, with these things following from that assumption:

- * a much more explicitly pro-business economic agenda;
- * embracing AI and technological disruption as inevitable;
- * restructuring what he calls welfare to force greater labour-market participation as if we are all to be slaves to the machine of increasing the wealth of a few;
- * weakening what he sees as anti-growth regulation;
- * prioritising cheaper energy over rapid decarbonisation;
- * expanding links with global capital and private-sector delivery, and
- * rebuilding Britain's geopolitical strategy around economic competitiveness.

It also means (and I base these observations on his Radio 4 interview this morning):

- * much more private involvement in the NHS as the private sector has the knowledge to transform healthcare that health professionals lack;
- * embracing the full power of AI;
- * denying that we have more people with disabilities now, because their number must be reduced as they are unaffordable, which is stated as a matter of fact, and
- * there is now no difference between the left and right now.

The last point is especially important. There is, he says, only one solution now, and that is the one he proposes. What that means is that he thinks what is called here the single transferable political party exists, it should exist, and there is no room for anything else because, Blair suggests, it answers the challenge of democracy, which is that it provides choice, and he has a problem with that because choice, he argues, gets in the way of business delivery. What Blair says then is fundamentally anti-democratic.

This is also implicit in his argument that Brexit cannot realistically be reversed, and that Britain should seek a more structured relationship with Europe over time. Choice is not

an option in this case, then, a claim that is also implicit in his insistence that the UK must adapt to a world increasingly shaped by major power blocs and technological oligopolies dominated by the US and China. When doing so, he exonerates Trump and suggests that those challenging him, like Mark Carney in Canada, miss his point. Blair's claim is that Trump is right: it is not, he says, the job of the USA to defend other countries. No wonder he is on Trump's *Board of Peace*.

What is striking, however, is what Blair does not appear willing to confront.

First, the essay assumes that technological acceleration is inherently desirable and that the role of politics is to adapt to it, rather than exercise democratic control over it. AI is treated as destiny, not choice.

Second, Blair continues to frame economic success primarily through the lens of competitiveness, growth and business confidence, which are precisely the assumptions that helped create the insecurity, inequality and political fragmentation now destabilising Western democracies. He explicitly rejected Andy Burnham's challenge to neoliberalism in his Radio 4 interview, suggesting Burnham is confused, when on this issue, he is anything but that.

Third, the essay largely ignores the deeper question now confronting politics everywhere, which is what happens when technological change destroys social cohesion faster than institutions can rebuild, resulting in crises in security and belonging?

And finally, there is a profound irony at the heart of the whole intervention. Blair presents himself as diagnosing a failure of political imagination in Labour, whilst simultaneously proposing a return to the very neoliberal settlement that generated many of today's crises in the first place.

The result is an essay that is important not because it offers convincing answers, but because it reveals the intellectual exhaustion of the neoliberal centre itself. Blair can see that the world is changing rapidly. He can see that AI is destabilising labour markets, politics and social identity. He can see that old assumptions are breaking down.

But his answer remains the same one neoliberalism has offered for forty years: trust markets, trust technology, trust business, liberalise faster, adapt harder, and hope growth eventually resolves the resulting social tensions. He is saying TINA, in other words, when TIARA exists: we can have a politics of care and an economics of hope, and that is increasingly important when Blair's worldview is precisely what very many rational people no longer believe.