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Posted on 03 March 2019 By Tony Judt

!Download Book ? Ill Fares the Land ? PDF or E-pub free

!Download Book ? Ill Fares the Land ? Something Is Profoundly Wrong With The Way We Think About How We Should Live Today In Ill Fares The Land, Tony Judt, One Of Our

Leading Historians And Thinkers, Reveals How We Have Arrived At Our Present Dangerously Confused Moment Judt Masterfully Crystallizes What We Ve All Been Feeling Into A Way To Think Our Way Into, And Thus Out Of, Our Great Collective Dis Ease About The Current State Of Things As The Economic Collapse Of Made Clear, The Social Contract That Defined Postwar Life In Europe And America The Guarantee Of A Basal Level Of Security, Stability And Fairness Is No Longer Guaranteed In Fact, It S No Longer Part Of The Common Discourse Judt Offers The Language We Need To Address Our Common Needs, Rejecting The Nihilistic Individualism Of The Far Right And The Debunked Socialism Of The Past To Find A Way Forward, We Must Look To Our Not So Distant Past And To Social Democracy In Action To Re Enshrining Fairness Over Mere Efficiency Distinctly Absent From Our National Dialogue, Social Democrats Believe That The State Can Play An Enhanced Role In Our Lives Without Threatening Our Liberties Instead Of Placing Blind Faith In The Market As We Have To Our Detriment For The Past Thirty Years Social Democrats Entrust Their Fellow Citizens And The State Itself Ill Fares The Land Challenges Us To Confront Our Societal Ills And To Shoulder Responsibility For The World We Live In For Hope Remains In Reintroducing Alternatives To The Status Quo, Judt Reinvigorates Our Political Conversation, Providing The Tools Necessary To Imagine A New Form Of Governance, A New Way Of Life

Last night I told a lawyer that I was a professor in a department of Liberal Education He took this to mean that I taught people to vote Democrat, although he wasn t so completely oblivious to assume that that meant I myself voted Democrat He went on to describe his experience in a Peace and Justice university course, which he d thought would be about world war II, but ended up being, and I quote, propaganda way to the left of Communism Anyway, lucky for both of us that I hadn t read this book before we had that conversation, or I might have tried to throw him out of a window I would have failed, and been punched in the face As for the actual book three stars for the argument plus one for the style It already feels like a period piece it doesn t help that chapter six has as an epigraph a quotation from Dominique Strauss Kahn That s a bit uncomfortable I can imagine that history professors in sixty years time should any such beings still exist would set this for their class Intellectual History of the Great Financial Crisis The prose is practically transparent, the argument is quite clear, and, although it s a little repetitive, there isn t too much padding I could ve done without the paeon for trains, much as I appreciate them and there s some slightly silly guff about how going to the Nationalized post office to wait in line with your fellow citizens makes everyone into one big happy family But other than that, it s a great read The argument itself is a good one, hence my narrowly avoided defenestration of a conservative Judt points out the great good that post war social democracy did for most people in the developed world, and suggests that the parliamentary left actually defend that heritage, rather than cringing when it s brought up He glosses over the failures of the post war governments i.e., stagflation , which is a shame I would have liked to see a well put together argument showing that the economic turmoil of the

seventies was due to contingencies rather than due to social democracy as such I sometimes felt like I'd read it before, in part because I have The first chapter is taken or less from The Spirit Level, which I skim read The second and third chapters are highly condensed versions of Judt's own magnificent Post War, with additional material on America High points include the historicisation and of the Austrian godhead of contemporary economics e.g., Mises main aim was to avoid Nazism he blamed Nazism on Communism therefore we must avoid Communism is that really a solid foundation for your thought and the general good advice that some things can only be done by government, and to assume that government can't do anything is no less ideological than the Stalinist assumption that government ought to do everything Of course, Edmund Bourke thought that too Finally, two great quotes The reduction of society to a thin membrane of interactions between private individuals is presented today as the ambition of libertarians and free marketeers But we should never forget that it was first and above all the dream of Jacobins, Bolsheviks and Nazis if there is nothing that binds us together as a community or society, then we are utterly dependent upon the state It is the Right that has inherited the ambitious modernist urge to destroy and innovate in the name of a universal project From the war in Iraq through the unrequited desire to dismantle public education and health services, to the decades long project of financial deregulation, the political Right has abandoned the association of political conservatism with social moderation which served it so well from Disraeli to Heath Yes, I'm referencing this three times By calling my lawyer friend a conservative I of course mean liberal American liberals insist on calling themselves conservative, even though they are knee jerk, ideological free marketeers who despite the very idea of community And it's time to call people on that nonsense. We no longer ask of a judicial ruling or a legislative act is it good Is it fair Is it just Is it right Will it help bring about a better society or a better world Those used to be the political questions, even if they invited no easy answers We must learn once again to pose them. Last night a citizen in my county had another citizen Marchman acted because they fit the profile of a mass murderer bullied in school and a loner now by choice I expected the reaction to the recent school shooting to be another call for the removal of arms I expected suspicion to turn on the different, and the mentally ill That is what always happens Why isn't the question posed about why it is so hard for the mentally handicapped that they couldn't get the help that they needed James Holmes no longer had access to help for his schizophrenia when he went into a movie theater and killed Batman moviegoers This doesn't happen because there are guns in the world The recent killings in China were not done with guns Society I'd do air quotations here if we were in the same room is a cold place I don't see how disposing of people as garbage, or ignoring them into corner, isn't as an important issue as bounding people up tight in laws written across the sky Surrender Dorothy There is no place like home and I'd sell my own back yard to keep you from BBQing in it Tony Judt agrees with me that society has forgotten about the people that live in it Mine, mine, mine is the stick of the day I don't

see eye to eye with him on everything A main thing is that I don't have a lot of faith in a set of unmovable laws the charge that decides the sentence in courts of law widens the cracks for people to fall through that is going to be right for everything and everyone break your mama's back I can't grasp a picture of everyone because I am depressed to my soul about how it is okay with many of my countrymen to target Muslims with a different set of laws Change the group in history and it would be seen as bad How can I grasp society if all you have to do is change the name and the rules change It's okay to point fingers at one political party or the other and do fuck all to fix anything No one is to blame as a whole or in segments by pointing at the peel. It's a weird book because sometimes he states that, for example, England wouldn't want to have their lives dictated by, say, Somalia Moreover, they wouldn't want to shoulder anyone else That is because people are not the same I know that I would never borrow or lend outside of my own immediate family It is different when you share your life with someone else Individualism doesn't have to mean we pretend that we are not all people who are capable of wearing other hearts on our sleeves From what I've read of Judt elsewhere and hints here he recognizes that these once well functioning societies don't really want to open their arms to everyone WWII with the exception of Russia and Bosnia, and look what happened there moved everybody back to their own place air quotations Love, peace and harmony, as the great poet once said Maybe on the dirty welcome mat next door I don't want to be like that Maybe there's a way to not pretend that everyone are brothers who are not always nice, anyway and also not pretend that you don't live together That would be my utopian dream Judt's heart was in the right place in writing this book He cautions against idealizing the past and yet there is a whiff of nostalgia as strong as stepping into an elevator with a woman who liberally uses her perfume I don't believe in the liberals in my country any when all of our representatives on both sides my air violin voted for indefinite detention how anyone can still pretend there is a difference in light of this fact is beyond me Why must one person rot in prison without trial or evidence so that someone else can feel safe Visions of community rot away like a flashback on Saved by the Bell The New Class I read that he wrote this book before he died for his children and their generation It is an emotional book I liked a lot that he doesn't write people off as not giving a shit about their lives, as if it HAS to be a certain way even if it is that way now and has been too many times before If you are going to have hope that would be necessary My hope is in and out based on how many shitty news articles I've heard of the day Based on people I've witnessed acted like a good person or an unmitigated asshole when they didn't have to be Also, this book was written before the European bank bailouts The landscape has changed already in a short couple of years It is still kind of all over the place It seems that looking for someone or some place to lead the way isn't going to work. I have felt many a pang of envy when reading about life in Germany, myself Their treatment of juveniles kids do not get executed as they do in Florida, or the safety nets in place if you lose your job or get sick I wish I could move to Germany The United States is cruel I'm not

sure it is because of a lack social programs as much as it is corruption from officials That people have easily fallen into calling social security paid for by citizens all through their working lives entitlements when it was stolen by the feds to fund their war also, Judt makes a comment about how they can't just print money as if they weren't actually doing just that This happens because people don't WANT to help each other Myths about welfare queens are readily applied to all, nevermind that drug tests required to get the welfare cost a lot of money that people who need welfare to begin with cannot afford A lot of untruths are sold on society Is it because people don't give a shit about people on hard times, or is it because someone government media Colluding forces want them to buy these stories Never mind that people paid for their retirement that they are taxed on, that no one should have to work FOREVER, that social security actually had a surplus and our government lied to us and they get away with it What is all of this for, then Never mind that cuts have to be made Judt had a great point how they talk about making hard choices as a virtue instead of trying to help anyone when the military budget was increased and billions are spent on Israel every year Why aren't questions about this asked by every American Why doesn't the UK ask why they have to be monitored on cameras as if they were all criminals Why don't we People don't trust each other and they don't ask why their government doesn't trust them. It is like how in the UK a board of directors can decide that women with faulty breast implants don't deserve medical care In France they decided that it was going to be paid for by their national health care I think this is probably too murky of an issue to get into for a book like this one it is only just over 200 pages long Socialism to work would have to be applied equally to all Laws to work, it goes without saying, and that is something we do not have Is it possible when people can decide that THAT group doesn't deserve what is a right for all The European Union made a lot of mistakes, as I see it, anyway That one doesn't have to pay taxes to where they move to within the union was a pretty big one In Germany the rich all over the EU have bought up affordable homes for tax purposes Laws are not written with the benefit of people in mind, that is for sure, even in the best of places Why not I agree with Judt that instead of throwing systems away that one should work on how to fix the problems within them I'd work on how tax dollars are funneled out of one school district and given to another one based on falsely trumped up statistics But, as Judt points out, when jobs are based on these problems the incentive to fix them isn't there Isn't that the problem with leaving everything up to the government instead of people owning their own lives Judt kept referring to what we have as a free market I cannot fully embrace his book for all of his good intentions because of this We do not have a free market and I am at a loss how he could have even written that we do We have fascism If government interference existed for the good of the people they would never have been allowed to move jobs overseas for corporate benefit and not doing the Chinese slave laborers any favors there either MUCH of the book is focused on the privatization of formerly federal institutions He also failed to mention the rampant corruption and illegal moving between the private and public sectors I

thought that was a pretty important point It isn't about saving Americans money in their tax dollars and turning a one time profit Prisons are privatized and then laws are written to ensure inmates to make those companies money I can't trust a government that has sold us out on purpose If there is an answer I don't think it is to write laws Florida sold away our water rights to the Nestle bottling company for a profit Under the table The bail outs no strings attached That were used to given bonuses to the heads More bail outs were given AFTER this had happened with the same results No provisions in place There is a lot at fault here than the citizens of the USA and Europe dismantling the old systems in place It is virtually impossible for new businesses because of the laws written by the federal government Not a free market Judt mentions the loss in religious belief as a reason in the loss of any movement towards common goals I have heard it said before that people don't have morals if they didn't have a religious background to rally around I have thought about this a lot in the past because I wondered how I came on my opposing beliefs from some adults in my family If people have some kind of frame to know people, if it is based on just themselves or the people they know intimately, if they take the time to care enough and think about those things, then shouldn't you be able to know right and wrong without a higher power giving you permission to think it I'm also conscious that my widening of my world came from people I interacted with and the books that I read This shit matters for all that we have our own minds It should be both, is the best I can come up with From everything I've seen and read, people should talk to each other I believe that everyone should have the right to have the life they want to live I wish I could live in that world and not be alone Why can't society just not pretend that we don't have our own head and heart spaces and everyone else does too Why is it so hard for people to not want innocent people to go to prison forever with no trial because the government says so That's not individualism That's just fear of other people and losing your own If people truly are going to keep those beliefs they should have them because they are capable of growing with them I don't get society I really don't I don't want to feel hopeless about it or feel that people just don't give a fuck about people because they are too lazy is that it to stand up when something wrong is happening to their fellow citizens I guess I don't care about the economics as much as Judt does I know that he's right that people turn on each other over economic issues In Malaysia they call their McDonald's Happy meals Prosperity meals I don't know why I just thought of that except that I had been thinking a lot these days about this friend I had years ago who was a Malay She liked me in spite of ideologically different than her in almost all things I liked that she didn't pat herself on the back for being open minded about it the way that some people feel the need to tell me that I'm weird But yeah, Prosperity meals is it I just wish that it was the most important thing to think about people as their own people Like how you would want your parent to respect you as your own person You live together and care about each other but you want to spread your own wings too Why can't society be that That's my utopian dream I was happy when I thought his book

was going to be about how people don't trust each other and what to do about it. But pretending that the liberals we have are really liberals and we should put our trust in something that only pretends to be something it isn't. No, I can't do it. Ernest Hemingway said that the only way to trust people is to do it. He killed himself. Hope for the good day when people are willing and hope it won't be the day when you could fall through the cracks too. Oh yeah, so the reason that things were better before than they are now is when you don't take care of something, right? If people asked for better, I liked the points Judt made about anti-voting under Communist countries where the vote was mandatory and false choices being totally different than what it is now. We have false choices BECAUSE of anti-votes and people not caring. It is hard to have hope in face of that. I can't fault Judt for writing a book asking people to care, I guess. But trying to see eye to eye with the faceless just ain't working the way the manual paints it. Aesop Rock Bent Life my heart of my heart favorite rapper writer voice. When I finished Tony Judt's *Ill Fares the Land* I finally understood the complicated feelings I had held inside of me for so long. Here at last was someone who knew the real me. I could imagine the emotional turmoil a teenager feels after he finishes *Death in Venice* and realizes he is gay. I can now come out. I can now stand proud as a Social Democrat. I realize I have a lot of challenges in front of me. Those on the left will pretend to like me but secretly despise me. Those on the right will openly persecute me. My contribution to society will be denigrated or ignored merely because of my ineluctable nature. Although I will always be accepted by a small number of highly educated people, the majority of the population will only see me as a stereotype based on years of propaganda from a biased media. Many politicians will say they are disgusted by the way I choose to live, offended by my most treasured values of compromise, moderation and rationality. They will say that these values are those of a perverted minority, that they are not part of what it is to be a voter but instead are evil lifestyle choices I make of my own free will. They will try and force me to change. But I am not ashamed. I know, despite all the trials and humiliation I can see in front of me, that as a Social Democrat I can be true to myself. Thank you, Tony Judt, for helping me understand. *Ill Fares the Land* is passionate, brooding, ultimately hopeful analysis of Western politics. Judt applies his vast knowledge of the 20th century to political recommendations. Remarkably, this is a short, elegant book. Drawn from speeches, it aims at a general, non-academic audience. Judt compresses huge swathes of history, economics, and ideology into brief, accessible chapters. *Ill Fares the Land* is a jeremiad against neoliberalism. From the title epigram on Goldsmith: *Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey. Where wealth accumulates, and men decay*, the book rails against our culture's current embrace of market thinking. We've extended the market to many sectors of life, and this has had ultimately disastrous effects. The financial crisis of 2008 and following economic stall are Judt's killer evidence. The book's main focus is the West, primarily Britain, the United States, and France. In that respect *Ill Fares the Land* makes a nice companion piece to Piketty's *Capital*. My review. Both reference other nations. Judt is,

unsurprisingly for the author of *Postwar*, very comfortable with the rest of Europe and also some of the former Soviet Union but the West remains the main arena. To sum up the rise of neoliberal thinking although Judt doesn't use the *n* word has led to a massive decline of people's trust in each other⁶⁶, especially in non-homogeneous societies⁷⁰. Things used to be better, especially in the 1945-1980 era. Not perfect. Judt is careful to criticize bad bureaucracies⁸². But cradle to grave welfare states worked: built decent societies, healing the terrors sowed in by economic collapse and global wars. This depended on a massively expanded state, and a popular engagement with politics and government. Then came the 1960s, and baby boomers. Growing up without any lived experience of 1914-1945's horrors, this new generation didn't appreciate the apparatus which built their very good life. They turned away from its supporting politics in favor of identity politics, hyperindividualism, disengagement, and ultimately an embrace of the market. This is not to say that a new generation of radicals was insensitive to injustice or political malfeasance: the Vietnam protests and the race riots of the 60s were not insignificant. But they were divorced from any sense of collective purpose, being rather understood as extensions of individual self-expression and anger⁹⁰. Judt here sounds a bit like an Old Left party activist, or Ralph Nader, or an American conservative. He even cites Camille Paglia⁸⁵. He really hates boomers. After two generations of Keynesian economics, the West turned instead to Hayek, Schumpeter, creative destruction, and von Mises. First came revolutionary conservative politicians like Reagan and Thatcher. Next came baby boomer leaders like Blair, Bush 2, and Clinton, whom Judt slams as passive mediocrities. This cohort of politicians have in common the enthusiasm that they fail to inspire in the electors. They do not seem to believe very firmly in any coherent set of principles or policies. They convey neither conviction nor authority. They are all Thatcher's children: politicians who have overseen a retreat from the ambitions of their predecessors. Convinced that there is little they can do, they do little. The best that might be said of them, as so often of the baby boom generation, is that they stand for nothing in particular: politicians lite¹³³.⁴ These boomer politicians led a transformative wave which sapped popular engagement with politics, demobilized participatory coalitions¹³², undermined the welfare state, and saddled governments with the costs of privatization's failures. The outcome has been the worst sort of mixed economy: individual enterprise indefinitely underwritten by public funds¹¹¹. A key point here is that the state doesn't wither away, but mutates or is reduced to something powerful and grim. The result is an eviscerated society: the thick mesh of social interactions and public goods has been reduced to a minimum, with nothing except authority and obedience binding the citizen to the state¹¹⁸. Let me share on this last point, which is striking and not fully developed elsewhere in the book. This is, I think, the dark heart of Judt's vision. It was first and above all the dream of Jacobins, Bolsheviks and Nazis: if there is nothing that binds us together as a community or society, then we are utterly dependent upon the state. Governments that are too weak or discredited to act through their citizens are likely to seek their ends by other

means by exhorting, cajoling, threatening and ultimately coercing people to obey them The loss of social purpose articulated through public services actually increases the unrestrained powers of the over mighty state 119 This makes for powerful insight into the age of drone warfare, government surveillance, and global war on terror. So what is to be done Judt asks this classic question, and, to his credit, offers a program He wants us to set aside the term socialism and instead inscribe social democracy on our banners Target 1 the reduction of inequality must come first 184 And here Judt offers a fine, brief account as to why Whether in Delhi or Detroit, the poor and permanently underprivileged cannot expect justice They cannot secure medical treatment and their lives are accordingly reduced in length and potential They cannot get a good education, and without that they cannot hope for even minimally secure employment much less participation in the culture and civilization of their society 184 That's a handy passage to have ready when people wonder what's so bad about growing inequality. Making this movement happen entails re-igniting public debates about what kind of government powers we want and accept We need to rediscover how to talk about change how to imagine very different arrangements for ourselves, free of the dangerous can of revolution 153 That last point is key no calls for uprisings, here, despite the book's final citation of Marx Judt doesn't want neo-social democrats to slavishly celebrate state power citing James Scott, he understands that the state fumbles 201 But he still wants us to reorganize the state against the market. A key part of the program is, intriguingly, literally, conservative For Judt the right is the radical change agent, so the left neo-social democrats can argue for conserving the welfare state This is something we need to figure out how to celebrate, not just to defend The Left has always had something to conserve 222 Another essential element is, well, scaring people Judt wants us to remember the terrors of world war and depression, and to remind people of the ease with which any society can descend into Hobbesian nightmares of unrestrained atrocity and violence He cites the 1990s Yugoslavian wars as a ready example If social democracy has a future, it will be as a social democracy of fear 221 And this neo-social democratic movement needs to convince the young That's where the greatest possibilities lie Judt seems to have given up on baby boomers, and has no notice for my generation X. So what did I make of Ill Fares the Land, and should you read it The book is a pleasure to read It's very well organized and accessible Judt's style is elegant and concise He's also very pithy and quotable, as I've shared above Here's another fun sample Whatever Americans fondly believe, their government has always had its fingers in the economic pie What distinguishes the USA from every other developed country has been the widespread belief to the contrary 200 His analysis is valuable and timely Like I said earlier, Judt goes well with Piketty, complementing the Frenchman's economic focus And boomer bashing goes down well for people of my generation X born 1967. His neo-social democratic program is intriguing In the American scene it's counterintuitive in many ways, although it chimes in nicely with Obama's Affordable Care Act It would lead us to defend Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid

Judt also offers Americans in 2014 a welcome alternative vision to Hillary Clinton's Democratic dominance. And, as a student of the Gothic, I applaud his politics of fear. However, Judt's emphasis on the national arena is wrong-headed, especially in reference to Piketty's call for global action. Not only is the world increasingly connected across national boundaries, but capital's mobility defies the actions of single nations.

2 his condemnation of recent politics fails to notice real gains: Civil rights advances for minorities, the successes of multiculturalism, women's progress, and some civil liberties gains are real. Setting them aside vitiates any left movement.

3 I was surprised at the book's lack of attention to technology. On the one hand, he doesn't make the Huxley Postman/Hedges argument about entertainment tech seducing people into complacency. On the other, Judt doesn't see any possibilities in new media and new practices. That's an odd omission given present debates and concerns, not to mention the historical roles of technology.

4 I don't think Americans or Brits have the guts to go for the fear approach. The war on terror's terrifying aspects have dulled with the passage of time; we're weary of fear. Meanwhile, an aging population seems to prefer basking in the glow of the past's perceived glories, and the young have a weird optimism.

5 Judt underestimates the power of financialization in the US. That means both the huge growth of the FIRE sector as a slice of our economy, and the way that sector has boosted its influence over government, aka regulatory capture. Taken together, I'm skeptical of the program. But I admire this book, and commend it to your attention.

I read this on the heels of Judt's opus, *Postwar*, and found it to be a fitting summation of many of the points implicitly contained in that work. Social democratic states are something that, at best, we have begun to take for granted. Created in response to the experience of the wars and the degradations of industrial capitalism, these states were laboriously created as a means of preventing a repeat of these human calamities. Having let our memories recede, over the last several decades we have begun tearing up this shared inheritance. In doing so we are opening ourselves up to a repeat of the historical disasters that arose about before social democracy became the Western norm, while creating a world of extreme inequality that would be profoundly unsustainable.

The book begins by going through a familiar appraisal of the economic and correspondingly social follies of the post-1970s era. Judt then proceeds to make an impassioned and nuanced argument in favor of the benevolent state, stopping off to respond to the Austrian School economists and their admirers, and this is where the book gets interesting. It is not so much his arguments, which I think would strike the already converted as common sense, but the superbly eloquent means he uses to unpack them. Judt argues that a social democratic state doesn't just provide people's material needs, it binds them together in a moral community by creating a sense of shared interest and identification. This is not just a guarantee against penury, but against conflict and a range of other social ills born of distrust and alienation. For example, the simple reality of shared physical presence in a shared space that is provided for by a shared effort—for instance, a grand public railway

station, or a post office where individuals congregate to receive benefits helps create a sense of community that makes society robust. Judt is obviously deeply concerned about the effects of atomization and anomie, as well as the retreat into gated communities both physically and psychologically. Without a shared investment in a welfare state it's not clear what people have in common with each other, or what binds their interests together. Without a shared sense of inheritance the only thing that can prevent social breakdown are ever greater levels of coercion. Throughout the book Judt really proves a font of interesting ideas, including the concept of the train and train station as the perennially modern signifiers of civilization as opposed to say, airports as well as the importance of physical markers of shared identity say, for instance, yellow New York City taxi cabs, or even school uniforms. The loss of these is replacing an iconic transport institution with Uber or a privatized train service causes harm not just economically but psychologically. It undermines the idea that society as such exists at all. Written in 2010, this book really was a warning about the consequences of our ongoing political decay. Thanks to privatization, the cult of self interest and a number of other maladies, Judt warns that we could soon be heading back into the dark days before social democracy took hold. As a historian of modern Europe, Judt is better placed than anyone to give this warning. He does so here in a manner that is impassioned, detailed, and beautifully written. He is hard on the Left and points out how lost it has become since it lost its grand narratives of History. He also calls for discarding terms like socialism laden as they have become with historical baggage, arguing instead for Social Democracy as a goal. Above all, before technical solutions, we need to find a vocabulary that will mobilize people and that articulates what it is we find so objectionable about the present state of affairs, Judt argues. It's too bad he is no longer around to help us do that, but he leaves behind some crucial guidance here. We know what things cost, but have no idea what they are worth, Tony Judt writes in the introduction to his latest work, *Ill Fares the Land*. Judt is one of the English speaking world's most accomplished academics, and he shamelessly identifies with the waning Left. His latest book is an impassioned plea to change the way we live, to broaden the limits of public conversation. Faith in the market and insistence on efficiency have led us, according to Judt, to lose our ability to do the things most precious to humans to imagine, discuss and act for our collective wellness. The author writes, Our disability is discursive we simply do not know how to talk about these things any. Policy debate is now a tense and nasty scuffle between unimaginative ideas. The book's first sections beat the reader over the head with the idea that we that big We that is meant to represent everyone are lost and on a destructive downward spiral. To set things onto a better path, Judt argues, we need to discard the misguided, narrow view of the public sphere that is dominant today. Judt is a social democrat he makes the point that while blaming the public sector is convenient, government is the only institution explicitly accountable to everyone. It's not perfect of course, but it is in theory at least interested in the public good. The Western world's hallowed corporations are accountable only to their

shareholders Abandoning government as a vehicle for reform will only further erode social cohesion. This lean, confrontational book comes on the heels of unfettered capitalism's most theatrical failure. The whittled-down Left has squandered, it has been argued, a huge opportunity to show the mainstream that new ways of seeing and thinking are desirable. After the burst bubbles of the past couple of years, it's pretty much impossible to argue with a straight face that financial markets properly regulate themselves. In light of these great upward shifts of wealth, no civic movement has gained mainstream influence. American public policy debates over health care and immigration are illustrative sideshows of what happens when citizens lose their connections to each other. The perverse contradictions of contemporary life are voiced by talking heads everyday preaching austerity for governments, but refusing to speak ill of profligate financial firms railing against the excesses of single-payer healthcare but supporting permanent wars with costs in the trillions. This work reads with a sense of intellectual partisanship. Judt has a side and sticks to it. Like all partisan arguments, it can gloss over the unsavory aspects of its own team. The book revolves almost exclusively around Europe and North America. The countries suffering most acutely from the described problems are hardly mentioned, with the exception of a brief section blandly titled Globalization. The past few decades have not been a total waste. We are much better at tolerating difference now than we were when we in the tightly bound era. Judt longs to return to. The fanning out of society has allowed for the growth of open forms of thought. Conditions have improved for immigrants, women and homosexuals. It's true that privatization often loots the future by selling off assets as a source of easy cash, but Judt's claim that all privatization is bad all the time is a bit off. Yes, private buyers will only take on sagging public utilities at steep discounts, but there are cases where public enterprises are sunk costs and getting a low price for them is preferable to hanging on and letting debt grow indefinitely. Greece's government probably wishes it had unloaded the country's rail transit when there were offers. This is a book intended for the young, in whom Judt clearly believes and is deeply concerned for. Young people today don't have the perspective of having lived through an economic depression; they came up in an era of plenty and expected conditions to continue improving. Now, they're heading into a crisis while lacking the experience and intellectual tools to deal with it. With universities cutting humanities programs, it's unlikely that *Ill Fares the Land* will enjoy a large readership among the people Judt wishes to reach, or spark the youthful debate he admirably calls for. This book is much better at describing what went wrong than it is at detailing how it might get better. Judt succeeds at conveying the urgency of the present, but is too vague in suggesting ways forward. He has made his case, with erudition and sense, now it's up to that big we to decide if these ideas will be preserved in policy and discourse, as Judt would have it, or behind glass with other relics of the past.

TONY

JUDT

*Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*, 1770*

ILL FARES

THE LAND

the last book Tony Judt wrote before *The Memory Chalet*. This is a really insightful and searing look at what has gone wrong since the concept of social democracy went off the rails in the 70s. Fundamentally it is due to the rise of the Chicago School and how disastrous it has been for everyone except what is now called the 1%. The only thing I didn't really agree with him on was what caused the change. He says it was a reaction to the counter culture. But I remember those times we were young and did not have any influence on the way the world was run. In fact that powerlessness was the driving force behind much of the revolutionary confrontations at the time. Judt wrote this, he says, for young people but everyone should read it. Yawn yawn. The world is a miserable mess, billionaires are greedy, politicians do nothing because the dogma of free markets and small government is running the show, pretending private sector booms aren't just cashing out years decades of careful public sector investment and development. Nod nod nod. I can't figure out why Judt thinks he's so original here. He must be hanging out with the wrong crowd. He certainly isn't hanging out with the crowd I read anyway. Didn't Naomi Klein write a much less cringey but still cringey critique of identity politics in *No Logo*. Seriously Tony, if you're going to complain about political correctness, relativism, excessive influence of special interests, narcissism etc, don't count on my vote. No matter how moral the frustrated young folk you are addressing are in their approach to politics, they will have to do better than this. When you compare gated communities to African American Studies courses you are talking ahistorical assimilationist caca. Early on, talking about the benefits of social democracy for which he thanks Keynes, extensively, Judt states that people trust each other in ethnically homogenous countries. The data he uses comes, I think, from Wilkinson and Pickett's book *The Spirit Level* and those with little anxiety about immigration. I was a little concerned that he left that hanging, but I waited patiently for him to return to this point in his *What is to be Done* chapters. I waited and waited. And he didn't come back to it, so we have to conclude that diversity is the problem, and it's immigration that destroys trust. Careless. Or he really means that. Oh the politicians of today. Pygmies. Not like Churchill I wish I was irresponsibly satirizing, but I'm not, just condensing what he actually said. It gets my goat that I agree with him about many things. Yes, mixed economies work quite well. Yes, welfare is a good thing and governments need to stop stripping it away. Yes, the NHS is totally awesome. Yes, it would be horrible if supermarkets were run by the state. Yes, Margaret Thatcher screwed us all. Too bloody right we need economic equality. This makes me think that I might be voting for one of those white guys who comment on blog posts and articles saying forget about race, it's all about class or it's sad that you feel this way. We're all just human. Shudder. I disagree with Judt on a whole slew of things, but I do enjoy reading his work and wish he was still around to debate with and probably shit on the rising radical left that I'm a part of.

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