An End to Progress and Liberty?

The triumph of the crisis makers poses a threat not only to material progress but also to personal liberty. These two staples of modern society are inextricably bound together. As the dominant dynamic strategy unfolds they advance together, and as it stagnates they retreat together. The growing pluralisation of modern society, as we have seen, leads us to forget the importance of longrun dynamics and the essential role of strategic leadership. And through our forgetfulness we unintentionally prepare the way for an end to progress and liberty. For who can remind us when our so-called experts – the orthodox economists – have failed to understand these things?

While the strategists understand intuitively that governments are failing them, they are unable to change the system. They can change governments but not government policy. It is a problem, I have argued, that has become critical in the past decade because orthodox economic knowledge has assumed a monolithic character. Today there is only one economic view of the world and only one policy. The problem is that both are entirely misleading. This has created a very dangerous condition in modern democracy that I call the frustration of the strategists. For in their frustration the strategists of some vanguard countries are turning increasingly to the political underworld to resolve the current impasse. This is a condition that will soon emerge in countries throughout the Western world if governments continue to pursue deforming neoliberal policies.

G.D. Snooks, The Global Crisis Makers
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The frustration of the strategists

Strategists are the driving force in human society. In our modern world, therefore, they are the creators of progress and liberty. But when frustrated by wilfully obstructive governments they are responsible for creating political systems that may promise release but in fact lead only to the curtailment of liberty and, ultimately, progress. In other words the frustration of the strategists generates a political cycle that can and will eliminate the progress and liberty that are characteristic of the technological strategy in its mature phase. The frustration of the strategists, which expresses itself in an increasing incidence of strikes and political volatility, is an outcome of the fatal forgetfulness.

In theory the ballot box determines government policy. The usual argument is that the party in opposition will learn from the mistakes of an unpopular government and will, on gaining office, change official policy. But in our contemporary world the logic of reasonable people is confounded. All major parties have been persuaded that there is only one valid view of the economic world and only one set of policies, and that these are those outlined by the neoliberal experts. Hence instead of competing with each other to facilitate the technological strategy, each mainstream party competes to be more neoliberal than the rest. This can be seen in election after election throughout the Western world since the early 1980s.

At each election we delude ourselves that the incoming politicians will have learnt from the mistakes of their outgoing colleagues. Our delusions, however, are invariably shattered. Despite their expressions of heartfelt concern about unemployment, new governments soon succumb to pressure from the crisis makers and end up pursuing neoliberal policies with more rigour than their opponents. They come to believe that the failure of their political opponents was due not to the type of policies they pursued but to the determination with which they pursued them. In the end it matters not that the parties in any political system are of the right or the left, because in the end the neoliberal experts have their way.

To what quarter should the strategists turn? None of the major parties, even those offering some Keynesian policies (mixed up with neoliberal philosophy), seem to understand the frustration of the strategists. The only support comes from the political underworld –