BREXIT SUICIDE NOTE

11 April 2019

(Programme not for “Have I None” Etcetera Theatre May 20190)

Twenty years ago I wrote Have I None. Its set in 2077. When I re-read it I was surprised. It is about a UK of panic, fear and repression. (As an aside, it anticipated the wave of knife crime.) Since then there has been Brexit. Have I None is a comedy about a tragic farce. Brexit is the last battle of the Second World War.

Suddenly our institutions are falling apart. For years we have lived a fake pretence. When war ended in 1945 we would not repeat the disasters that followed the First World War. We would build a new humane society. It lasted thirty years. Then our elites tore it down. Of course they had fought Hitler, he was invading their patch and stealing their pickings. After the war they restored the old order of rich and poor, them and us. In the Brexit referendum more people voted to leave than in any other election ever? But more people voted not to leave than in any other election. Does that justify the leavers denying the others their birth-right of free choice for ever?

It was the voice of the people? What people? It was the lies of the rich and their gutter press, the fantasies of the privileged whose heads are so full of noxious confusions they can’t see beyond their eyeballs. It was the voice of democracy? What democracy? We don’t live in a democracy. I give only one fact. Billionaire businessmen and bankers pay themselves millionaire bonuses in a society where poor children are fed from charity food banks. A society that tolerates that for one day – one hour -- is shameless, vicious and undemocratic. We want our country back? Its not your country. How many acres do you own? How many mansions? How many shares? Where are your tax havens? Did you go to Eton, Harrow, Oxford to learn the skills of deceiving others and above all the high culture of deceiving yourself?

Often you can tell lies from the way they’re told. This is especially true of people who are lying to themselves, a common political disease. Chronic lying creates its own voice. Rees-Mogg, the “talking dead” expressionless voice of repressed permanent rage. Boris Johnson, born with his last words already in his mouth inherited from a dead past. Poor eternally-bewildered Michael Gove, voice damp with tears of self-pity, a permanent infant. Such people are pathetic and lethal.

The three claims – the people, democracy, country – are exactly those made by Hitler. For Hitler totalitarianism was the perfected form of democracy. Because the rich own our mass media we live in a “totalitarian-democracy.” It is frightening how Brexit stimulates Hitlerite racism and anti-Semitism. They were waiting ready in our social-psyche. After Germany lost the First World War Hitler promised to give the Germans back their land and their self-image. Hitlerism depends on the sense of loss -- the loss all elites feel when the world changes and they lose the power they thought was theirs for ever. And the “little people” who have nothing to lose but identify with them out of their impotence and ignorance. A midland’s working-class woman told a BBC reporter she had voted for Brexit and would do so again because “then we’ll get our country back and open our local coalmine” that Thatcher had closed. Farage and Johnson would say it with more fake erudition but they would be as wrong and as stupid.

Hitler claimed he and the people were one. In a broadcast Teresa May spoke as if she were the people already addressing her own Third Reich. She spoke her blatant lies with dogmatically.
“if you want the people to believe the lie make it big.” It was frightening. The tory part abused the nation by choosing the grotesque Teresa May. Now they are trying to force the grotesque Boris Johnson on us. Remember Teresa May made him a government minister. Vultures of a feather stick together.

There are mass street suicides in “Have I None.” Hitler shot himself. All Fascism ends in defeat and suicide. Its the logic of the situation and on this massive scale its the logic of reality. Drama should reveal society to itself. When I wrote this play I did not foresee Brexit. Drama did; that is the logic of reality. Brexit is our suicide note.

Hitler won.

Update 26 6 19

The grotesque has reached a point where people caught up in it no longer know what they are doing or saying. I listened to David Davis on the radio trying to persuade himself he believed what he was saying about Brexit. Grotesque!

Capitalism now creates social, technological and consumer problems far too severe for it to solve. Once politics responded to, or at least gestured to, human need and suffering. Not now – that’s become too demanding. Instead conservative politicians become comics and clowns – Trumps, Johnsons, Farages – and play with our lives as if they were clowns juggling with wooden clubs. Nothing is crueller than irresponsible political laughter. Johnson behaves as if he’s running the European Community (he probably fantasises he is!) – so that he can tell it not what it should do but what it will do.

Often small clues expose great crimes. Johnson relaxes by playing at toy buses (once it was always toy trains). He wont talk publicly about his private life in order to protect his women and children? A noble sentiment! – except that he doesn’t protect them IN his private lie. If he did there would be nothing to be publically silent about. We should not be taken in by his reeking cartload of guile and hypocrisy.

So what is our situation? Everywhere conservatism is slipping irrevocably to the right. Already the slippage shows in the grotesque gothic politics of Rees-Mogg and his Fascist admirers When told some of his argument might be Nazi he denied it because he said Hitler murdered millions in death camps and he said he wouldnt. We would expect no less, though some of his admirers will be disappointed. Mussolini and Franco didn’t run death camps but they were Fascists, and even Hitler wept when he thought of all a Fascist had t do to be good at it. Its not a matter of what Rees-Mogg wants but the logic of what he wants. That is the logic of the situation. (Read the first words of this update.)

Thirties Fascism was created by depraved ideological monsters. Modern Fascism wont be the same. It will be worse – because it is being created by witless political comics. In its greed for profit Capitalism has turned technology into a world epidemic. It brings the existing social and political institutions into conflict and creates the new incipient Fascism. New institutions will take time to develop. Putin says liberal democracy is finished and sends out his assassins. With Brexit we infect
ourselves with two diseases at once, greed for new profits and nostalgia for the past. Both are fatal. It is a crisis not just of the UK, the West and democracy but of the human race. Something monstrous has begun to happen. In time society, all human culture, will break down and cities become wastelands where roaming cannibals hunt for scattered bones to pick at. Is it now me who is being grotesque? No, progress is the delirium of modernity but when humans abandon their culture and lose their senses nature takes over and destroys. The record is written in the earth. We must learn from the past.

Decline always begins slowly – but the fall is fast.

-------------