

[A worryingly uncertain future](#) [1]

Written by [Max Titmuss](#) [2] | Tuesday 20 September 2011



As I sit looking out of my window here in Berlin I see all manner of depressing buildings: pre-fabricated tower blocks, industrial-looking chimneys; all suitably lying under a grey, overcast sky. If any one place in the world displays the battle-scars of the twentieth-century and the ravages of totalitarianism, that place must surely be Berlin.

Looking back at what happened here over the last 100 years should give cause for anybody to think: the state, under various guises, has done its utmost to destroy this city. In 1914 pickelhaubed soldiers marched down Unter den Linden to the battlefields of northern France. Although the allegiance and ideology of the troops, shells and bombs that came subsequently changed, be they Hitler's brownshirts or Honecker's Nationale Volksarmee, they all acted on behalf of the state.

Today, however, much of this seems relegated to the history books ? done and dusted. We are told we live an enlightened age; we are experiencing the End of History. Whilst we concern ourselves with our 42? plasmas and obsess over Kate Middleton's daring fashion exploits, the barbarity of the state has been replaced by politicians giving away teddy-bears; politicians who 'understand' us and who want to be 'our mates'. We have become politically inert, but not to worry; our friends up top have it all under control.

But is it so? Or are we merely being duped by a class of political elites out of touch with reality? By almost every yardstick our politicians are failing us, and despite the cuddly façade of our political elite there are dark clouds on the horizon. Our economy remains in the doldrums despite being 'injected' more times than Pete Doherty. The Eurozone staggers from one crisis to another like a drunk navigating an obstacle course. Our personal liberties are increasingly curtailed whilst we are being 'nudged' in directions deemed suitable by the state. If the last century has taught us nothing else, it is that humanity is better served with minimal state interference: the state is history's largest mass-murderer.

But so what? One only has to observe history to realise that the state is most dangerous when it is of an extreme persuasion. Electorates tend only to swing to the outer reaches of the political spectrum when socio-economic uncertainty is rife: people are loathe to throw their lot in with an unknown, potentially psychopathic, ruler when everything is running smoothly.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I look upon events unfolding in Brussels with peculiar mix of emotion. Whilst an unaccountable, undemocratic and, in my eyes, dangerous behemoth may be in the last throes of life, at what cost has this come? It may prove overly-wishful to believe that the EU will simply fizzle out be followed by a resumption of normality ? there is too much economic and political baggage for such a

simple resolution. A dissolution of Europe as we know it could lead to a political environment not seen since the darker decades of the 20th century.

History reminds us that things often don't stay trouble-free for very long, especially when government is at hand. Will the state be as deadly to this century as it was the last? Only time will tell.

[blog comments powered by Disqus](#) ^[4]

Source URL: <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/international/a-worryingly-uncertain-future>

Links:

[1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/international/a-worryingly-uncertain-future>

[2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5869>

[3] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript

[4] <http://disqus.com>