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In recent years, believers in a small state have largely failed to convert good intellectual arguments against interventionism into concrete political achievements. Whig argues for a change of gears by liberals, away from politics and towards a focus on single-issue group campaigning.

Classical liberals, libertarians or indeed anyone arguing for a smaller state (I'm going to use 'Liberals' as shorthand) have a serious problem. We don't seem to be very successful at converting the corpus of intellectual work and powerful arguments against interventionism into concrete political success. Whilst the Archbishop of Canterbury, Polly Toynbee or Michael Sandel, to name a few, seem to think we are living in an era of unbridled free markets, any sensible observer can see that this is not the case; state capitalism or corporatism is the status quo. In reality, the trend of the last twenty years has been a move away from free markets with growing taxation and more regulation. What can be done to reverse this trend or at least to revive the momentum of support for limited government?

While there are some elements of the Conservatives and perhaps Liberal Democrats with (some) Liberal ideals ? and one or two Labour politicians have sensible ideas on particular issues ? there are no elements of mainstream political life we can call home. Fortunately, one might say the same for out-and-out socialists but I would argue that, given the size and reach of government and the state of public discourse, they are rather more at home in contemporary politics.

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