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Unwinding the Iron Lady [1]

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Recent weeks have seen a flurry of articles about the upcoming release of The Iron Lady, featuring Meryl Streep as Margaret Thatcher. A lot of these have been drearily predictable ? superb performance of a dynamic personality but, heaven forbid, the writers could never vote for Thatcher and lament her destruction of a golden Britain that never was. One Guardianista admitted to being only six when Thatcher was ousted but still claimed to be opposed to everything she stood for.

Expect more of this when the film actually opens in early January but prepare to demand from such critics what, precisely, of Thatcher?s legacy needs undoing. Two decades and four prime ministers later, very little has actually been undone so here?s a shortlist of the possibilities:

- Re-open the coal mines and send the noble working classes back underground to face an early death from accident or disease. The mines will need a subsidy, of course, but we could switch these from green energy schemes and support instead increased output of carbon dioxide.
- Simply hand the Falklands over to Argentina, apologise and offer up a couple of aircraft carriers as compensation. We?re building some now for which we have no plans.
- Speaking of war, Thatcher never invaded a foreign country so perhaps we should pick up on some of her successors' examples in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Of course, our reduced military capabilities limit suitable candidates but there must be some minor evil we can correct - mineral exploration in Greenland, say, or money laundering in Belize.
- Re-nationalise privatised companies from airlines to gas to telephones to electricity to you name it. Increased waiting times for delivery and service would do much to calm our frenetic pace of life. The recent success of Northern Rock, Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyd?s point the way.
- Discourage competition and innovation. Do we really need our horizons broadened by cheap flights to every corner of the world? What was wrong with the stodgy fare in the supermarkets before Tesco, Sainsbury?s, Asda and Morrison?s got down and dirty?
- Eliminate quality in our manufactures and banish those foreign devils from Toyota, Honda, Nissan, BMW and Tata. Bring back British Leyland so we get to know our local garage mechanic better.
- Make the pips squeak again. There?s too many smart and creative types flouncing around London so let?s get those marginal tax rates back up to 70%. Just think of the parking spaces this will free up.
- Re-purchase former council housing but only pay the original selling price. That?ll teach those contented families to aspire beyond their station.

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