

THE GOOD LIFE IN THE GOOD SOCIETY

An Ideology for the Twenty-first Century

Government, with responsibility for the good of society, may carry on pragmatically dealing with problems it faces but will be more effective if it has a clear vision of the sort of society it wants, an ideology. It is ideology that must provide a direction, framework and coherence for political action. Currently no political party in Britain is putting forward such an ideology.

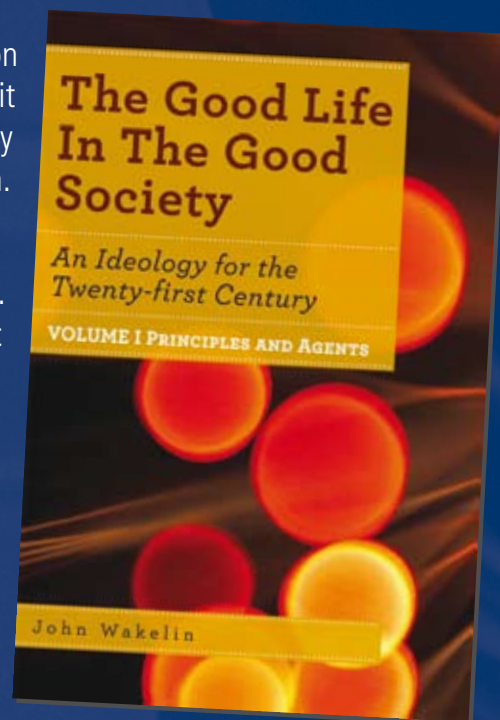
It is now widely accepted that the state is not effective in running industries. But the state is also ineffective, for structural reasons, at running public services. The wastefulness, excessive cost and harmful effects of the welfare state are moreover increasingly felt. The idea that the state should look after us "from the cradle to the grave" turns citizens into dependants and undermines in particular the independence of those who receive means-tested benefits.

But capitalism is also seen to be full of imperfections: ownership of enterprises by absentee shareholders, the gap between rich and poor, the enormous wealth controlled by a few and, above all, the cultivation and exploitation of human greed for money and material goods. With the decline of socialism and the perceived failings of capitalism, there is a big hole where we should see a vision of the future. We have to find a better way, a Big Idea to fill that hole, a new ideology which can inspire renewed advance for our country in our new century. The point of this work is to suggest what that ideology might be.

The first part of Volume I of this work identifies those qualities, physical, intellectual and moral, which characterise the good life and then the qualities society needs to enable its members to live such a life. The second part of this Volume identifies how best institutions intermediate between the individual and society, in particular the state and the enterprise, should be structured and financed and how best they should operate to be effective agents in providing the services needed to build such a society.

Volumes II and III expose the inadequacy of the methods currently employed in providing these services and show how the application of the principles set out in Volume I will create just and effective arrangements which will enable the individual to live a good life in a good society and in which most problems of the present will disappear.

To promote this ideology and create such a good society it may be necessary to establish a new political party, led by people of absolute integrity and committed to the common good.



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