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Wishful Thinking

What if? What if Hitler had died in a car crash in 1930: Would the Nazis have come to power, would the Second World War have happened, would six million Jews have been exterminated? What if there had been no American Revolution in the eighteenth century: Would slavery have been abolished earlier and the Civil War of 1860–65 have been avoided? What if Balfour had not signed his declaration: Would the state of Israel have come into being at all? What if Lenin had not died in his early fifties but survived another twenty years: Would the murderous cruelties of what became the Stalin era have been avoided? What if the Spanish Armada had succeeded in invading and conquering England: Would the country have become Catholic again, and if so, what would have been the consequences for art, culture, society, science, the economy? What if Al Gore had won the American presidential election in the year 2000: Would there have been a Second Gulf War? What if – as Victor Hugo speculated at enormous length in his enormous novel *Les Misérables* – Napoleon had won the Battle of

Waterloo? How indeed, the novelist asked in bewilderment, could he possibly have lost?[1] Things that happened, as James Joyce wrote in *Ulysses*, 'are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass?'[2]

The question of what might have happened has always fascinated historians, but for a long time it fascinated them, as E. H. Carr observed in his *What Is History?*, his Trevelyan Lectures at Cambridge in 1961, as nothing more than an entertaining parlour game, an amusing speculation of the sort memorably satirised centuries ago by Pascal, when he asked what might have happened had Cleopatra had a smaller nose and therefore not been beautiful, and so not proved a fatal attraction to Mark Antony when he should have been preparing to defeat Octavian, thus causing him to lose the Battle of Actium. Would the Roman Empire never have been created?[3] Most likely it would, even if in a different way and possibly at a slightly different time. Larger forces were at work than one man's infatuation. Similar satirical intent can be found in the eighteenth century, in popular stories such as *The Adventures of Robert Chevalier*, published in 1732 in Paris and quickly translated into English, which imagined the Native Americans discovering Europe before the voyages of Columbus.[4] And, famously, Edward Gibbon, in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, poked fun at the university in which he had spent what he called the most idle, and the

most unprofitable years of his life, by suggesting that if Charles Martel had not defeated the Moors in 733, Islam might have dominated Europe and 'perhaps the interpretations of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohammed'.[5] Clearly Gibbon thought that in the end, at least as far as Oxford was concerned, things would have been much the same as they were.

Brief allusions to possible alternatives to what actually happened can be found scattered across the works of a variety of authors through the centuries, from the Roman historian Livy's speculation on what might have happened had Alexander the Great conquered Rome, to Joanot Martorelli and Martí Joan de Galba's 1490 romance *Tirant lo Blanc*, which imagined a world in which the Byzantine Empire defeated the Ottoman Empire and not the other way around. Written within a few decades of the actual fall of Constantinople to the Turks, it was the first approach to a fantasy history to appear and had a clear element of wishful thinking in it. Yet it had no real followers for a very long time. A rationalistic approach to history such as Gibbon's, replacing a view of the human past that treated it as the unfolding of God's Divine Providence in the world, was an essential prerequisite for speculating at length in historical rather than fictional writing on possible alternatives to what happened. As Isaac D'Israeli pointed out in 1835 in the first treatment of the subject, a brief essay entitled 'Of a History of Events Which Have Not Happened', the concept of Divine Providence could not convince

an impartial observer when both Protestants and Catholics claimed it for their own. This insight was not new, though D'Israeli tried to buttress it by mentioning a number of historical texts that speculated, even if only very briefly, on what might have happened had, for example, Charles Martel lost to the Moors, the Spanish Armada landed in England, or Charles I not been executed. All D'Israeli really wanted to argue was that historians should replace the idea of 'Providence' with the concepts of 'fatality', as he called it, and 'accident'.[6] Yet one further step was needed before such speculations could be unfolded at length. Gibbon, like other Enlightenment historians, still regarded time as unchanging and human society as static: his Roman senators can easily be imagined as bewigged eighteenth-century gentlemen debating in the House of Commons, and the moral qualities they displayed were much the same as Gibbon found among his contemporaries. It required the new Romantic vision of the past as essentially different from the present, with each epoch possessing its own peculiar character, as the novelist Walter Scott and his historical disciple Leopold von Ranke believed, for the question of how the principal characteristics of an era might have been dramatically altered if history had taken a different course.[7]

Unsurprisingly, it was a French admirer of the emperor Napoleon, Louis Geoffroy, who first developed this idea at length. Indeed, the emperor himself spent a good deal of his time on the island of St. Helena, where he had been exiled following his defeat at Waterloo, in dreaming about how he might have defeated his enemies. If the Russians had not set fire to Moscow

as the Grand Army neared its gates in 1812, he sighed, his forces could have overwintered in the city, then, 'as soon as good weather returned, I would have marched on my enemies; I would have defeated them; I would have become master of their empire … for I would have had men and arms to fight, not nature'. The legend of Napoleon's defeat by 'General Winter' was born.[8] Geoffroy did not think it necessary to douse the flames in Moscow; instead, in his 1836 tract *Napoléon and the Conquest of the World*, he has the emperor march north toward St. Petersburg, inflict a crushing defeat on the Russian army, capture Czar Alexander I and occupy Sweden. After resurrecting the kingdom of Poland and completing his conquest of Spain, he lands an army on the East Anglian coast north of Yarmouth and pulverises a British army of 230,000 men led by the Duke of York at the Battle of Cambridge. England is incorporated into France and divided into twenty-two French *départements*. By 1817 he has wiped Prussia from the map, and four years later he defeats a large Muslim army in Palestine and occupies Jerusalem, destroying all the mosques in the city and taking the black stone from the ruined Dome of the Rock back to Paris.[9]

This is by no means the end of his success, for in quick succession after this, Napoleon conquers Asia, including China and Japan, destroying all the holy places of other religions, establishes hegemony over Africa and brings America under French control, following a request to this effect by all the North and South American heads of state at a congress held in Panama in 1827. In his inaugural address as 'Ruler of the World', Napoleon

announces that his universal monarchy 'is hereditary in my race, there will from now on to the end of time only be one nation and one power in the globe. . . . Christianity is the only religion on earth.' Armed with a new title conferred by the pope, *Sa Toute-Puissance*, he even finds domestic bliss once more, since the death of his Austrian wife, married only for political reasons, allows him to remarry his beloved Joséphine.

In 1832, finally, he dies, having accomplished more than any previous statesman or general in history. Far from being a ruthless dictator, he has preserved the legislature and proved a liberal and peaceful monarch. As the linkage of the victory of France with the victory of Christianity suggests, all this is due above all to the workings of Divine Providence and in this sense at least, Geoffroy's approach was rather old-fashioned. It also incorporated a very strong element of historical or perhaps one should say pseudohistorical inevitability: one change in the course of history, at Moscow, led inexorably to a whole, lengthy chain of events that followed on without any possibility of deviation or reversal, indeed led to the end of history itself, as announced by Napoleon in his inaugural address as Ruler of the World. Even Victor Hugo did not go this far, arguing in *Les Misérables* that Divine Providence had decreed that there was no place any more in history for a colossus like Napoleon, so that Waterloo, where the prosaic and unimaginative nature of the dull military technician Wellington had proved victorious over the genius of Napoleon, marked a sharp turning point in world history in a larger sense than simply marking the end of French military glory.[10]

Of course, as Geoffroy himself well knew, Providence had decided that Napoleon should not rule the world, and he reminds readers of the reality at various points by mentioning a scurrilous alternative history within his own alternative narrative that presented Napoleon as losing a battle at Waterloo and being exiled to St. Helena, or by having Napoleon, aboard ship in the South Atlantic after conquering Asia, espy St. Helena on the horizon, a sight that sends a shiver down his spine and makes him raise his eyes for a moment beyond his fictive existence to the reality that actually encompassed him. Readers knew that Napoleon in reality had been defeated before Moscow and that the Russians had won in 1812 precisely because they had refused to meet the French emperor in a pitched battle. Nevertheless, for all its weaknesses, Geoffroy's work is the first recognisable full-length, speculative, alternative history and it appeared at a time, in the mid-1830s, when the Napoleonic legend was riding high, to triumph a decade and a half later with the events that followed the 1848 Revolution, above all the coup d'état of Louis-Napoleon and his assumption of the title of Emperor Napoleon III. The whimsy of Pascal or Gibbon had given way here to a serious political purpose. Geoffroy himself was the adopted son of Napoleon I, who had taken him under his wing after his own father was killed at the Battle of Austerlitz, and his own full first name was not Louis but Louis-Napoleon. Still, the book's fascination and appeal continued through the nineteenth century into the twentieth, and it was frequently reprinted as a reminder to the French of what might have been, so much so that in 1937 the writer

Robert Aron countered it with a narrative in which Napoleon wins the Battle of Waterloo but decides that war and conquest are a bad thing, abdicates and goes anyway, although voluntarily, into exile on St. Helena, showing his 'inner greatness' and his 'insight into necessity'.[11]

Geoffroy's narrative was clearly wishful thinking on the grandest possible scale. Its methodological premise was taken up and systematised two decades later, in 1857, in a series of articles by the philosopher Charles Renouvier, later published as a book. Renouvier gave it a name, by which it has been known ever since in French and German: *Uchronie*. 'The writer composes an *uchronie*, a utopia of past time. He writes history, not as it was, but as it could have been.'[12] Renouvier would have been more honest had he said *should* have been. His own approach was explicitly political. He described his method by means of a diagram showing a series of stages, beginning with the initial moment at which imaginary history deviates from real history, the *point de scission* that causes the *première déviation*. But while the *trajectoire imaginaire* is a single line stretching undeviatingly into the imaginary future, the *trajectoire réelle* keeps branching off into short lines with dead ends, which can only be linked by leading them back to the main line of the imaginary. The key point is the angle at which the imaginary trajectory departs from the real and Renouvier declares that this depends on the purposes of the writer.[13] In Renouvier's case this is to advance the cause of freedom by realising it through an imaginary past, a case he illustrates by chronicling

the history of religion since the Romans with reference to the principle of toleration.

After describing the initial situation (Roman intolerance toward Judaism, which he justifies, in a manner not untypical of mid-nineteenth-century French anti-Semites, by calling the Jews religious fanatics who dreamed 'of ruling the world'; and a comparable intolerance toward early Christianity), he launches the *première déviation* by having the emperor Marcus Aurelius mistakenly declared dead in one of his campaigns, to be replaced by the general Avidius Cassius, a supporter of the Roman Republic. Later on, jointly with Marcus Aurelius, who returns to the throne, Cassius inaugurates a program of reform that creates a free peasantry instead of a slave class and eventually, through many twists and turns, leads in the Western Empire to a state religion based on the household gods along with toleration of other religions. A fanatical Orthodox Christianity triumphs in the East, leading to the Crusades, not against Jerusalem but against Rome, whose inhabitants an army of 400,000 rabidly intolerant Eastern Crusaders aims to convert to what they think of as the true teachings of Jesus, happily failing to do so as they start fighting each other over what exactly these were. In the East, intolerance leads to political chaos and defeat by the barbarians, while the tolerant Stoicism of the Western Empire survives the declaration of independence by the Gauls, Britons, Spaniards and others, who, unencumbered by religious strife, create a federation of independent European states. Similarly, in the East, the victorious barbarians reintroduce Christianity, but in a

reformed state, without the confessional, without purgatory, without monasteries and in general without any of the trappings of Catholicism or Orthodoxy. Science and learning flourish everywhere and Renouvier ends with an appeal to humanity to form a league of nations with an international court. By contrasting this happy story in a series of appendices with what he saw as the inhumane and unfree depredations of Catholicism through the ages, Renouvier brought out the contrast between ideal history and real history; the latter is only in his view given meaning by the former, and indeed the book is presented as the translation of an old manuscript that a family of persecuted religious nonconformists kept in order to remind themselves that things could be different and might easily have been better.[14]

Neither D'Israeli's brief essay, published in an obscure edition that did not even appear in England, nor Geoffroy's heady Napoleonic fantasy, popular though it was in some quarters of the French reading public, nor Renouvier's difficult and densely argued anticlerical philosophical treatise, started any kind of fashion for speculation on different paths history might have taken. Contributions to the genre appeared only sporadically, as with the British historian G. M. Trevelyan's essay 'If Napoleon Had Won the Battle of Waterloo', written for a competition staged in 1907 by the *Westminster Gazette*. Trevelyan picked up on the speculations of Victor Hugo to suggest that if Napoleon had won the Battle of Waterloo, the British would have been forced to make peace, and economic and social conditions would have deteriorated under the leadership of the archconservative Lord

Castlereagh (despite a rebellion of working people led by Lord Byron, which would have been put down and the noble poet executed). British liberals would have fled to Latin America, where a reactionary British government would have joined forces with Spain to fight to keep the Spanish colonies, while on the continent, despite Napoleon's influence, the ancien régime would have continued more or less as before in its unreformed, obscurantist ways. Far from launching himself on a conquest of the world, Napoleon, confronted with a France and indeed a Europe exhausted by more than two decades of almost continuous warfare, would have decided enough was enough and settled down to a peaceful old age. In this scenario, Napoleon finally dies while contemplating a new war to unify Italy, a war that did not happen.[15] Trevelyan was an enthusiast for Italian unification who wrote three substantial volumes on its hero, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and was a committed liberal in politics, part of a Whig tradition that included his great-uncle Lord Macaulay, one of the most vocal advocates of the extension of voting rights in 1832. His narrative of events following a putative victory by Napoleon at Waterloo is as far removed as possible from wishful thinking; it is, rather, a negative story, illustrating how badly things might have gone and thus, by implication, how Waterloo, despite a temporary wave of political repression and economic hardship in Britain, laid the foundations for the multiple triumphs of liberalism in the nineteenth century by destroying the tyranny of the French emperor. In fact, of course, as Trevelyan knew perfectly well, none of this was very plausible, for a defeat of the forces led

by the Duke of Wellington in 1815 would not necessarily have meant the end of the war; the Allies might have regrouped and fought on to eventual victory; after all, their resources far outweighed those of the exhausted French by this time. Here too, therefore, was an alternative history driven mainly by political motives and beliefs.[16]

But the function of counterfactuals as entertainment was far from dead. In 1932 the first ever collection of essays in the genre appeared, edited by Sir John Collings Squire under the title *If It Had Happened Otherwise* and including a reprint of Trevelyan's piece on Waterloo. Squire was a literary critic and poet, a somewhat blimpish figure who in the 1930s sympathised with the British Union of Fascists and was incorrigibly hostile to literary modernism. He liked to project an image of a beer-drinking, cricket-loving English gentleman, in keeping with his surname – Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group were indeed wont to refer to him and his coterie as the 'squirearchy' – and many of his publications were light-hearted and humorous. *If It Had Happened Otherwise* (published in the United States as *If: Or History Rewritten*) belongs to this category of his books.[17] The contributors were for the most part literary men (there were no women among them). Many of them reversed the course of history for entertainment and effect: the popular historian Philip Guedalla had a good deal of fun imagining the role of Islam in Europe if the Moors had defeated the attempt to expel them from Spain in 1492,[18] as did Harold Nicolson in speculating on Lord Byron as king of Greece. More political was the contribution by

Monsignor Ronald Knox, who painted a dire portrait of what Britain would have been like had the General Strike of 1926 been victorious; ruled by trade unions and left-wing socialists, the country would have become something like Soviet Russia, with freedom of education and expression suppressed and the state controlling everything. This was another example of the dystopian version of alternative history, as practised by Trevelyan many years before.

However, quite a few of the contributors to Squire's volume took the opportunity to indulge in a bout of wishful thinking at its most nostalgic. G. K. Chesterton's 'little literary fancy'[19] speculated about what would have happened if Don John of Austria had married Mary, Queen of Scots – or in other words, England had remained, like the author, Catholic (Britain and Europe would have progressed faster than they did); the French writer André Maurois suggested that had Louis XVI been bolder and managed to avoid the French Revolution, France would have become a constitutional monarchy like Britain; the German popular historian and biographer Emil Ludwig thought that if the liberally inclined German emperor Frederick III had not died of cancer after a few months of his reign in 1888, Germany would have become a parliamentary democracy and not remained the authoritarian state that went to war in 1914, with such disastrous consequences for itself, Europe and the world; Sir Charles Petrie, another conservative historian close to the British Fascists (though always anti-Nazi), in a chapter reprinted from an earlier publication, considered that things would have turned out better

for Britain, and especially its literary and cultural life, had Bonnie Prince Charlie succeeded in his bid to seize the throne from the Hanoverians in 1745; and Winston Churchill argued that had Lee won the Battle of Gettysburg the eventual consequence would have been a union of the English-speaking peoples, something he represented in his own person as the child of an English father and an American mother. Nostalgia and regret for a history that had taken the wrong turn permeate a good number of the essays in the volume, making them something more than a mere literary amusement; a characteristic of 'what-if' versions of history that was to recur with a vengeance many decades later.

Clearly, many of these fantasies would be easy to challenge and it would not be difficult to draw out their implications plausibly enough in an entirely different direction from the one their authors imagined events would have taken. Philip Guedalla's imagined Islamic Europe (a theme already explored, as we have seen, by Gibbon and D'Israeli) bracketed out the militant Catholicism of the French, who might well have obeyed a call from the pope for a fresh Crusade against the victorious Moors in Spain; Lord Byron would probably have had no more luck in trying to control the factional and disputatious Greeks than did their real monarch, the Wittelsbach prince who became the unfortunate King Otto; the British trade unions who staged the General Strike in 1926 were moderate pragmatists who would probably have been just as horrified at the idea of a Soviet England as Monsignor Ronald Knox was; a marriage between Mary, Queen of Scots and Don John of Austria would have done

nothing to make the Scottish queen less flighty or more sensible or more capable of controlling the Protestants, and the Austrian prince would have been excluded from British political life as firmly as Philip II was when he married her namesake, Mary I of England; neither Louis XVI of France nor any of his family showed the slightest inclination to become constitutional monarchs and would have restored an absolutist regime as soon as they were able; the idea that Frederick III of Germany was a liberal has been shown by a recent biography to be a myth, and in any case he was a weak character who was putty in the hands of the ruthless and unscrupulous Bismarck; Bonnie Prince Charlie may have been a romantic figure to posterity, but he too was weak and indecisive and unlikely to have changed much if he had come to the throne; and America was already too strong and independent in the 1860s even for a victorious Confederacy to contemplate a union with England. No doubt the essays were not intended to convince, merely to entertain through speculation; but already it was clear that historians needed to be more careful than Squire's contributors were about setting plausible conditions for their imaginings if they were to carry much conviction with their readers.

Squire's volume in some ways reflected the uncertainties and anxieties of British politics in the late 1920s and early 1930s, when no political party could achieve a majority in Parliament and politicians such as Oswald Mosley and Winston Churchill crossed easily from one party to another. As the contours of British and European politics became clearer with the rise of

Nazism, such speculations died away. Counterfactual essays continued to appear on occasion, some more serious, some less so, in the following years. Arnold Toynbee's massive, multivolume *A Study of History* included a handful of attempts at speculation of this kind, picking up on Gibbon and discussing what France might have been like had Charles Martel not defeated the Moors, but also imagining the consequences of a comprehensive Viking conquest of Europe.[20] In 1953 the American author Joseph Ward Moore published a novel, *Bring the Jubilee*, set in the mid-twentieth century, following Lee's victory nearly a century before at the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War (the point from which the counterfactual narrative diverges from the real timeline of history). The victorious Confederacy has conquered South America and much of the Pacific, but the Germans have won the First World War and become a rival superpower. Slavery has been abolished but technological change has been slow, with no airplanes, no lightbulbs, no cars, no telephones. While the Confederacy flourishes, the United States has been squashed into a relatively small area of North America and has descended into poverty and racial violence. The intent here is to reverse the signs of real history in the interests of satire, rather than to posit a plausible counterfactual scenario; and the science-fictional nature of the novel is confirmed when the hero discovers how to travel back in time (unlikely, given the technological backwardness posited by the author), visits the Battle of Gettysburg and inadvertently changes the course of the battle so that Lee loses rather than wins, thus shifting the timeline back to what we

ourselves have experienced: the North defeats the Confederacy and everything follows that followed in reality. Conveniently, the hero is now trapped in the past he has created, as the world he has come from disappears without trace.[21]

Sporadic articles, usually by specialist historians speculating in their own field of research, can be found in various journals and periodicals during the 1960s and 1970s without ever inaugurating a fashion. In 1961 the American journalist William L. Shirer, author of the massive bestseller *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, published his brief essay 'If Hitler Had Won World War II', suggesting that the Nazis would have conquered America and inaugurated a Holocaust of American Jews. Designed to try and revive American memories of the evil of Nazism, the essay fell into a period when the trial in Jerusalem of Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi official who had been the chief administrator of the extermination of European Jews, was reawakening public memory about the real crimes of Nazism. Shirer had been a press correspondent in Germany during the 1930s and had witnessed Nazi anti-Semitism at first hand. Convinced from the outset that Hitler enjoyed the overwhelming support of the great mass of ordinary Germans, he did not want the history of Nazism to be forgotten in an era of Cold War friendship between West Germany and the United States.[22] In a more academic vein, in 1976 the British historian Geoffrey Parker published a more serious essay in counterfactualism with a brief study on what might have happened had the Spanish Armada succeeded in landing in England in 1588: Philip II of Spain would have conquered the

country and restored Catholicism, and by harnessing the rich resources of the English economy to his global ambitions, he might well have led the Counter-Reformation to victory in Germany and established Spanish rule over North America.[23]

Parker was to return to counterfactuals four decades later with a collection of essays and a more systematic attempt to justify speculations of this kind. His essay, and the various collections that preceded and followed it, demonstrated one feature of counterfactuals and that was that as historical speculations they always take the form of essays, usually very brief ones. Deprived of genuine empirical material, historians soon run out of steam. Lengthier counterfactual speculations have almost always taken the form of novels. A particularly notable attempt at a counterfactual novel was made in 1975 by the Italian author Guido Morselli, whose book *Past Conditional: A Retrospective Hypothesis* mixes novelistic techniques with chronicle and history to portray a world in which the stalemate of the First World War is broken in 1916 by an Austrian force that uses a secret tunnel under the Alps to launch a surprise invasion of northern Italy and penetrate into southern France. Meanwhile, a British commando unit kidnaps the Kaiser, whose typically self-important offer to have himself exchanged for 80,000 British prisoners of war arouses such indignation in Germany that the head of the government, Reich Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, is forced to resign and is replaced by the liberal politician Walther Rathenau, who concludes an armistice with the Allied powers after the German army has broken through their lines on the Western

Front and the German navy has destroyed the British in the North Sea. Rathenau's armistice terms, which, to everyone's surprise, make no territorial demands but propose instead the creation of a federal Europe on a socialist basis, are rejected in Germany, where he is ousted in a coup amid anti-Semitic demonstrations and replaced by Hindenburg. The field marshal imposes a rule of such harshness on the defeated countries that resistance movements spring up everywhere and the trade unions across Europe bring him down by a general strike, leading to the return of Rathenau and the final creation of the European socialist confederation.[24]

Morselli makes strenuous efforts to present carefully researched details taken from the real historical events of the war, just moving them around in time a little, so that the Kapp putsch of 1920, in which a right-wing coup in Berlin was defeated by a general strike, is moved forward in time and put into the hands of Hindenburg, and the military breakthroughs on the Italian and Western fronts follow a minute description of the real state of affairs preceding them, drawn from historical documents. Yet the changed historical facts that underpin his narrative are too numerous and too arbitrary to carry conviction. The secret tunnel through the Alps is a daring enough hypothesis on its own, but it is by no means certain that it would have given the Austrians the decisive advantage Morselli describes; moreover, it is not an altered historical circumstance but pure fictional invention. And to add to it the kidnapping of the Kaiser turns the whole scenario into obvious fantasy. Walther Rathenau certainly believed in

European economic unity and a centrally directed economy, but far from being a socialist, he was a businessman of considerable wealth, a liberal in politics; and the idea that he would have tried to establish a political as opposed to an economic European confederation is again stretching plausibility beyond its limits.[25] In the end, the book is neither quite counterfactual history nor pure counterfactual fiction. Above all, it is an example of wishful thinking. Morselli's counterfactual history of the war follows Renouvier not only in presenting an altered past as a retrospective utopia but even in bringing it to an end with the realisation of the idea of a league of nations. The only difference is that by the time Morselli was writing, such an international organisation actually existed, though not at all on the basis of socialism.[26]

The following year, in the atmosphere of cautious liberation that was beginning to spread across Spain in the wake of the death of the dictator Francisco Franco, the Catalan author Victor Alba published a book entitled *1936–1976: History of the Second Spanish Republic*, in which he narrated the four decades that passed from what was in reality the final crisis of the Republic as if the Civil War had never happened. Instead of falling victim to a botched military coup that led to the outbreak of three years of hostilities between Republicans and Nationalists, the government under Casares Quiroga arrests the plotters, sends Franco and his fellow generals into premature retirement and placates the Left by nationalising nearly a third of the economy. The altered historical starting point depends on making Quiroga a far firmer and more decisive political leader than he actually was (in reality he

hesitated too long, then resigned). Like Geoffroy, Alba interspersed his narrative with glimpses of the real course events took, all the while presenting them as acts of a disordered imagination. Real people appear in the story, including Franco himself, who is reinstated as chief of the army general staff when the Germans and Italians invade in 1940, seeing in the Republic an important ally of Republican France. Guernica is bombed by the Germans as it was in reality, the poet Lorca is murdered and events of the Civil War are transmogrified into events of a putative conflict between Spain and the Axis powers.[27] To this example of pro-Republican wishful thinking came a riposte in the shape of *The Reds Won the War*, published by Fernando Vizcaíno Casas in 1989. While Alba took great pains to provide his book with the underpinnings of academic research, the far-right Francoist Vizcaíno presented the Republicans, polemically and without troubling greatly to examine the evidence, as Communists or their willing tools, exaggerated the numbers involved in Republican massacres of Nationalist prisoners, downplayed or ignored the atrocities committed by his own side and defamed Republican leaders as mass murderers. By indulging in distortions of such an obvious nature, however, he undermined the plausibility of his own construction, prompting even more extreme and polemical counter-fantasies from the other side, in which Franco (for example) dies a miserable death by drowning in human excrement at the outset of the conflict. The passions unleashed by the Civil War and the decades of authoritarian rule that followed it found expression after Franco's death in Spanish counterfactual

scenarios that refought the war all over again, and with increasing bitterness.[28]

Deep political crises and divisions such as these could sometimes prompt counterfactuals of a rather desperate kind. In 1972, during the political convulsions caused by the Vietnam War, the American historian Barbara Tuchman imagined that Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai had written to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in January 1945 offering to come to the White House to discuss the war in China, and particularly the conflict between their own Communist forces and the American-backed Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-Shek. The fictional letter, supposedly suppressed up to this point, was printed by Tuchman in the journal *Foreign Affairs* and followed up by an essay on what might have happened had the offer been taken up: the United States might have been persuaded not to back the Nationalists, Mao could possibly have agreed not to regard the United States as his enemy, 'there might have been no Korean War with all its evil consequences . . . We might not have come to Vietnam.'[29] But the opportunity had been lost, she hypothesised, by the obstructive behaviour of the then American ambassador in China. Whether this scenario was realistic was doubtful in the end, however, not least because the American hostility to Communism was already so deep that an alliance with Mao against Chiang seemed unlikely in the extreme.

In Britain, the situation was very different. Squire's rather frivolous collection held the field for a long time. No doubt it was the essays in *If It Had Happened Otherwise* that E. H. Carr had in

mind when he dismissed such speculations as a mere parlour game.[30] An attempt to get beyond this limitation was made in 1979 by Daniel Snowman, a popular historian, author and BBC broadcaster with a long list of solid historical publications to his credit. The date of publication suggests deeper political roots in the climate of uncertainty and self-examination that prevailed in the 1970s, as the 'decline of Britain' debate raged in the UK. Just as Margaret Thatcher was proclaiming that she could do better for Britain than the existing elites were doing, so Snowman was inviting historians to say how they could have done better than historical actors had managed in the past. In the introduction to his collection *If I Had Been . . . Ten Historical Fantasies* (London, 1979), Snowman complained that in speculative histories like Squire's, 'there are no rules as to the degrees of "ifness" permitted, and the results can be wildly fanciful as the mood dictates'.[31] Enlisting ten professional historians in his aid, Snowman sought to reduce the arbitrariness so evident in a number of the contributions to Squire's collection by asking them

> to evoke a strictly authentic historical setting and to recreate as accurately as possible the situation facing the personality around whom their essay revolved. There was to be no *deus ex machina*, no invented assassination, no melodramatic intervention of the fates to give artificial wings to the imagination. Furthermore, our authors were asked to concentrate upon a genuine moment in the past and upon the decision-making that took place at the time:

> speculation about what might or might not have happened subsequently was to be only a secondary consideration. Thus, the 'ifs' of this book occur within a framework carefully circumscribed by historical facts. All that is changed is that the central character of each piece is deemed to have decided upon a slightly different, but entirely plausible course of action from that actually adopted.[32]

Snowman's procedure introduced major constraining factors here, which limited the degree of speculation in an effective way. Finally, he asked each contributor to conclude his contribution (again, all the writers were male), by reflecting on its implications. This gives his collection a unity found in few others.

However, it still has problems. The first of these, as Snowman recognises, is that by choosing 'great men' (and they are indeed all men) he is giving credence to the discredited idea that history is made by great men and little or nothing else, where most historians would point to the role of more impersonal factors in addition or even in place of the impact of the individual. Of course, as he concedes, 'only a fool or an incurable romantic would attribute the fundamental movements of history almost exclusively to its few leaders'. Nevertheless, in the end, he sidesteps rather than confronts this issue, by commenting simply that the essays in his volume 'are not meant to imply a view one way or the other about the part played by the "great" men of history so much as to provide data for what will surely be a continuing debate'.[33]

More interestingly, perhaps, Snowman broaches the subject of free will and determinism, pointing out that the present is, or at least seems to be, indeterminate, with a vast array of choices of possible courses of action before us; only later do we begin to identify the larger reasons why we took one choice rather than another.[34] Here too, however, he leaves the issue unresolved, inevitably so perhaps, since the conditions under which his contributors are asked to imagine a different choice being made are so carefully and narrowly circumscribed.

More seriously still, as Niall Ferguson has pointed out, Snowman's entire collection falls into the trap of wishful thinking.[35] No historian, asked how he would have behaved had he been in the shoes of a major historical person, is going to say he would not have been able to match up to that person's acumen, brilliance, or boldness. The whole point of the exercise is that he's going to do better; he's going to avoid the mistakes of his avatar and succeed where his avatar failed. Thus Roger Thompson, as the Earl of Shelburne, prevents American independence; Esmond Wright, as Benjamin Franklin, prevents American discontent of the same era from spilling over into revolution; Peter Calvert, as Benito Juárez, saves the emperor Maximilian, foisted on the Mexicans by the French, and brings decades of peace to that troubled land; Maurice Pearton, as Adolphe Thiers, prevents the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71; Owen Dudley Edwards, as Gladstone, solves the Irish Question; Harold Shukman, as the liberal democrat Alexander Kerensky, head of the provisional government in the months following the February Revolution of

1917 that overthrew the czar, prevents the Bolsheviks from coming to power; Louis Allen, as the Japanese military leader General Hideki Tojo, avoids bombing Pearl Harbor; Roger Morgan, as West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer, reunifies Germany following Stalin's note offering talks in 1952; Philip Windsor, as Alexander Dubček, averts the Warsaw Pact invasion that in reality overthrew his liberal-communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1968; Harold Blakemore, as Salvador Allende, preserves his socialist-communist government in Chile in 1972–73 by averting a military coup.

The historians in Snowman's collection all do what historians should never do: they lecture the people of the past on how they should have done better. Do we really think we could have avoided the mistakes they made? Of course, it's easy to succumb to the temptation. But we should resist it. As Ian Kershaw remarks in his study of ordinary Germans' attitudes to the Nazi dictatorship: 'I should like to think that had I been around at the time I would have been a convinced anti-Nazi engaged in the underground resistance fight. However, I know really that I would have been as confused and felt as helpless as most of the people I am writing about.'[36] We can only imagine that we could do better than people in the past because we have the luxury of hindsight and, crucially, because we are different people with different ideas and assumptions and different ways of making decisions. Snowman of course is aware of this problem and therefore he insists that the behaviour of the historical personages whose identity the authors assume has to be in line with what we

know about them from the historical evidence. But this does not entirely get around the problem of getting into the skin of a long-dead historical actor, as he concedes.[37] In practice, what these historians do is to wish a personality change on their subjects: Kerensky becomes more decisive than he actually was, Stalin becomes more sincere in his 1952 note offering German reunification than he actually was, Allende becomes less muddled and confused than he actually was, Tojo becomes less aggressive than he actually was, Maximilian becomes less helpless than he actually was, Thiers becomes more insightful than he actually was. Snowman's injunction to respect the personalities of the individuals into whose skin his contributors slip has to be disobeyed if the sleight of hand is to work.

More important than any of these considerations, in the context of a discussion of alternative histories, however, is the fact that the contributors, with rare exceptions, say little or nothing about the consequences of the alternative decisions they discuss. When they do, their speculations are so brief as to amount to little more than tentative suggestions. Shelburne's avoidance of American independence has Queen Elizabeth II ruling America two centuries later; the victory of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico is thought most likely to have made little difference in the long run, with a series of coups and dictatorships, although the possibility is canvassed that there would have been no Mexican Revolution in 1911 and thus the United States might not have intervened in the First World War, which might also have been averted if there had been no Franco-Prussian War in 1870. But

the intervening years are elided, with the consequence that none of the possible events or developments that might have taken place during them is taken into consideration. Ultimately, in fact, these longer-term hypotheticals are of secondary interest to the contributors, strictly subordinate to the main task given them, of examining the decisions and impersonating the actors allotted them and exploring their immediate historical context.[38] Moreover, these speculations put enormous imaginary power into the hands of individual politicians, giving them retrospectively the means to defy or overturn the massive historical forces with which they were confronted.

Very different was the attempt made by Alexander Demandt, a German specialist in the history of ancient Rome, to justify counterfactuals in 1984. In his brief treatise *History That Never Happened*, he argued that 'references to possible alternative developments reveal crucial events that could easily have turned out otherwise'. The problem with this rather banal claim was that such references were not really necessary in order to reveal the events in question. Demandt's fifteen examples covered familiar topics such as the defeat of Charles Martel in 732 (a peaceful Europe marked by the early advance of scientific knowledge); the victory of the Spanish Armada in 1588 (a Catholic England, made liberal perhaps by Philip II's dismissal of the Duke of Alba and declaration of religious toleration); and the survival of the archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 (no First or Second World War). Demandt, therefore, was as prone to wishful thinking as any other counterfactualist. Nevertheless, he introduced a

number of key questions that were to occupy students of the genre for some time to come, with his assertions that 'alternatives remote from reality are unlikely', 'events are predetermined to differing degrees' and 'unlikely events stand alone'; or in other words, he raised the problem of how far, and in what way, the counterfactual imagination can be restricted or limited in some way. 'Historical fantasy,' he rightly observed, 'needs to be checked against empirical plausibility. The measure of the unreal is the real.'[39]

Demandt's treatise introduced a note of German seriousness into the subject, but Anglo-American frivolity soon reasserted itself with a slim volume of twenty-one essays by various authors, mostly British and American professional historians, edited in 1985 by the French history specialist John Merriman, a professor at Yale, entitled *For Want of a Horse: Choice and Chance in History* (a reference to the passage at the end of Shakespeare's *Richard III* in which the king is slain in battle because he is unable to find a horse to ride away on, thus inaugurating the new dynasty of the Tudors and bringing the Middle Ages in England to an end). Advertised on the front cover as 'humorous speculations', the collection included brief discussions of a variety of topics, including the role of the pigeon in France, or borscht, beetroot soup, in Russia, or, more generally, bad luck (as in the case of the Stuarts, who had more than their fair share of it), or chance and contingency, as in the wrong turn taken by Archduke Franz Ferdinand's car at Sarajevo in 1914, resulting in his assassination. In fact, only five of the essays are really speculative, in the sense

that they are devoted mainly to discussing alternative courses taken by events, rather than narrating the events themselves and underlining the role of chance and contingency in the way they turned out.

There are entertaining essays on what might have happened had Fidel Castro, a talented baseball player in his youth, accepted the contract that might have been offered him by the New York Giants (no Cuban Revolution); or Voltaire settled in Pennsylvania (he would have supplied ideas to the American Revolution); or the Native American girl Pocahontas not rescued the pioneer John Smith (Virginia would have failed, so no American Revolution and no Civil War); or the Confederacy won that Civil War ('Southern civility' is imposed on the Union); or James II triumphed in 1688 (England would have become Catholic again); or Governor Hutchinson managed to avert the Boston Tea Party (America would have become 'another Canada'). The point of all this, however, as the editor says, is to reintroduce 'playfulness and good humour' to historical writing and not much more.[40] The derivation of large consequences from tiny events is part of the fun. Once more, in many cases, almost superhuman powers are ascribed to individual actors: do we really think James II of England had the power to turn the Protestants of England, the overwhelming majority of the population, into Catholics? And personality changes are required too. Do we really think that Fidel Castro would have forgotten his politics if he had become a professional baseball player?[41]

Frivolity and whimsicality are two of the main reasons why

alternative histories have not been taken seriously by historians, even by some of those who have advanced them. Historians have always considered it their first task to find out what did happen, not to imagine what might have happened, and while the former task poses challenges of varying severity, the latter is on the face of it quite impossible, for history depends crucially on rules of evidence, and in the latter case there is little or no evidence to which those rules can be applied. Historians have traditionally been suspicious of speculation, so their reaction to 'what-if' scenarios has generally been hostile or indifferent. Aviezer Tucker has asked sceptically: 'What are historiographical counterfactuals good for, beyond an entertaining exercise of our imaginative faculties?' Tucker concedes that historians implicitly use counterfactuals when they designate a cause as *necessary*, implying that had it not occurred, then things would have turned out differently. But normally historians are not so bold as this, he says, rightly, and in any case, in calling a cause necessary rather than possible or contributory, they almost never speculate about the alternative course events might have taken had it not been operative.[42]

And the 'what-if' question has often threatened, as it were, to put historians out of a job by reducing everything to a matter of chance. Some exponents of the genre indeed seem to delight in emphasising tiny causes for huge events, in the spirit of Pascal's speculations on what might have happened had Cleopatra had a smaller nose; A. J. P. Taylor was a prime exponent of this approach, both in his explanation of the outbreak of the First World War in *War by Timetable: How the First World War Began*

(London, 1969) and in his own autobiography, *A Personal History* (London, 1983). But if everything were the result of accident, then explanation would become impossible, and indeed Taylor himself emphasised the inevitability of Nazism in his book *The Course of German History*, published in 1946. No historian has earned more ridicule than H. A. L. Fisher, who in his history of Europe, written in the early 1930s, concluded despairingly that there could be 'only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen' and admit that 'there can be no generalizations'.[43] Fisher's views have been widely rejected by historians because generalisation and explanation have been seen by most of them as their principal business. If historians don't explain things, they descend to the level of chroniclers.

Then again, as we have already seen, the 'what-if' question has often been attached to individuals, as in speculations about how things might have been different had Hitler died sooner or Lenin later than he did. Even E. H. Carr was in his last years prepared to admit that Soviet Russia might have been spared the worst ravages of Stalin's great purges had Lenin lived into the 1940s, as was quite possible until he was severely injured by an assassination attempt during the Russian Civil War. This suggestion – another example of large causes deriving from small events – betrays a naïve belief in the extra-historical powers of great or at least powerful men that Carr in his earlier days would not have countenanced. Carr's speculation about Lenin may itself of course be seen as a kind of wishful thinking of the sort he criticised so

trenchantly in *What Is History?* In Carr's case, it betrayed a perhaps surprising tendency to want to rescue the historic reputation and legitimacy of the Bolshevik Revolution by suggesting that it had been perverted by Stalin, and blaming the mass violence, murder and deliberate starvation of the 1930s in the Soviet Union on a single man rather than on the Soviet system itself.[44] By stressing the importance of individuals such as Lenin and Stalin, he was going counter to the move away from a 'great men' approach to history in the second half of the twentieth century that occurred with the rise of social and then cultural history, which, well before he wrote, provided another reason why the 'what-if' question aroused distrust.

For these reasons, therefore, historians have generally tended to avoid speculation about what might have happened and stuck, on the whole, to trying to establish and explain what did. As the great German historian Friedrich Meinecke noted: 'In historiography, one usually refrains from giving an explicit answer to the question of what would have happened had a particular event fallen out differently, or if a certain personality had been removed from the action. Such considerations are called futile, and so they are.'[45] But in the last couple of decades there have been signs of a change. It has come from two directions. First, from quantitative economic or econometric history, and here in particular from the American Robert Fogel, whose first major publication posited what he called a 'counterfactual' assumption, that is, he built a statistical model of what would have happened to the economy of the United States if the railways had not been constructed, as a

'counterfactual' hypothesis, in order to show statistically what the contribution of railways was to American economic growth, or, in other words, what difference they actually made to the American economy. This was a statistical exercise, it was not actually an attempt to imagine an America without railways, or to indulge in nostalgia about the American West in the years before the iron horse crossed the Great Plains, or to say that there had been any possibility at all, however remote, that the railways might not have been built. It had nothing to do at all with what might have been. The concept of a 'counterfactual' here was precisely what it said, namely, deploying an element of what did not happen in order better to explain the consequences of what did. The power of this mode of analysis derived precisely indeed from the impossibility of imagining the counterfactual ever having had a chance of becoming, as it were, factual.[46]

Fogel's analysis was essentially statistical: the railways appeared, or rather disappeared, as an element in a series of equations, which produced roughly the same result as they did when the railways were put in; in other words, he showed that railways didn't make all that much difference to U.S. economic growth. Similar methods have been used in other areas of economic or econometric history, though they have been criticised for placing on fragile nineteenth-century statistics a weight of sophisticated number-crunching that they simply cannot bear, and for making a series of unproven and perhaps unprovable assumptions about the ways in which railway building was, or was not, linked to other parts of the economy, assumptions that in the end all went

to prove the case that was being made. Finally, whatever its merits or demerits, the econometricians' use of counterfactuals had nothing to do with chance and contingency in history, rather the contrary.[47] This is not really a 'what-if' question at all, since no real alternative to what happened is being posited.

Up to the 1990s, then, 'what-if?' speculations on history remained essentially at the level of entertainment, appeared intermittently and did not demand to be taken particularly seriously. At this point, however, a change came from a second direction. A spate of new collections appeared and the flow of publications has not dried up. In 1997 Niall Ferguson edited a collection under the title *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (London, 1997). This collection both expressed and boosted a renewed interest in the genre. It came out almost simultaneously with a very extensive collection of essays by American historians, *If the Allies Had Fallen: Sixty Alternate Scenarios of World War II* (ed. Dennis E. Showalter and Harold C. Deutsch, New York, 1997). 1998 saw a special issue of *Military History Quarterly* devoted to the topic, republished the following year as *What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (New York, 1999), edited by Robert Cowley, an American military historian and founder-editor of the *Military History Quarterly*. The words 'the world's foremost' were dropped from subsequent editions, but undeterred, Cowley followed this up with two more collections: *More What If? Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (New York, 2001) and *What If? America: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*

(New York, 2005). In 2004, Andrew Roberts produced a collection entitled *What Might Have Been: Leading Historians on Twelve 'What Ifs' of History* (London, 2004). Two years later, the trio of Richard Ned Lebow, Geoffrey Parker and Philip Tetlock published *Unmaking the West: 'What-If?' Scenarios That Rewrite World History* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2006). On both sides of the Atlantic, therefore, counterfactual history was clearly coming into fashion toward the end of the twentieth century and at the start of the twenty-first.

The vogue has continued up to the present. The year 2006 also saw Duncan Brack's collection *President Gore . . . and Other Things That Never Happened* (London, 2006), a follow-up to *Prime Minister Portillo . . . and Other Things That Never Happened* (London, 2004) and a prequel to *Prime Minister Boris . . . and Other Things That Never Happened* (London, 2011), both edited jointly by Duncan Brack and Iain Dale, the last book straying from the genre of alternative history into the even riskier field of future prediction. The most prolific of all authors in the genre, retired Greek-American military man Peter Tsouras, has published half a dozen 'alternate histories', beginning in 1994 with *Disaster at D-Day: The Germans Defeat the Allies* (New York, 1994) and continuing with books on Stalingrad, the Cold War, the War in the East, the Battle of Gettysburg and a collection of essays entitled *Third Reich Victorious: Alternate Decisions of World War II* (New York, 2002). The popular historian Dominic Sandbrook contributed a string of articles in the *New Statesman* in 2010–11 exploring similar alternative histories from British

history. Jeremy Black wrote a whole book devoted to the subject of *What If? Counterfactualism and the Problem of History* (London, 2008). Doubtless there have been more contributions to the genre besides these; doubtless there will be more to come, above all in the Anglo-American intellectual world.[48]

How do we account for this recent fashion for counterfactual history? In his illuminating book *The War Hitler Never Won*,[49] Gavriel Rosenfeld ascribes it first of all to the decline and fall of the ideologies that dominated Western thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As fascism, communism, socialism, Marxism and other doctrines vanished from the scene or were transmuted into milder, less rigid ideologies – as someone once put it, when the *isms* all became *wasms* – so teleologies vanished and history became open-ended, freeing up a space for speculation about the course or courses it might have taken. There is a parallel here, maybe, with the end of providentialist history that enabled writers like D'Israeli, Geoffroy and Renouvier to start thinking about alternative history in the nineteenth century. At the end of the twentieth, along with the ideologies, the concept of progress also took a hard knock, removing certainty or even probability from the future. In place of the optimism of the sixties generation came a new uncertainty, as threats like global warming, terrorism, pandemics, fundamentalist religion and much more besides, came to create a widespread sense of disorientation and anxiety. The growing disbelief in a knowable future encouraged speculation about the course history might have taken in the past, when it too seemed to be open-ended. At the

same time, the reading and cinema-going public turned to fantasy, filling the void created by the decline of the great ideologies.

Along with these general cultural changes came the emergence of postmodernism, with its scepticism about the possibility of real historical knowledge, its blurring of the boundaries between past and present, fact and fiction, and its questioning of linear concepts of time. Postmodernism restored a belief in the subjectivity of the historian as it undermined the scientific search for objectivity so characteristic of the historians of the 1970s. The British historian Tristram Hunt, writing in 2004, complained that as rigorous social history gave way to empathetic cultural history, 'what we are offered in the postmodern world of contingency and irony is a series of biographical discourses in which one narrative is as valid as another. One history is as good as another and with it the blurring of factual, counter-factual and fiction. All history is "what if" history.'[50] Though Hunt was exaggerating for effect, he had a point. The digital revolution has enabled us to manipulate at will the photographic record of the past and create movies where most of what we see is computer-generated rather than a representation of reality, while cyberspace has introduced us to an alternate reality where the people we encounter are not necessarily who they seem to be. Many people now learn about medieval Europe primarily from fantastical representations such as *Game of Thrones* or *The Lord of the Rings*. On television, history is presented as infotainment, where drama-documentaries 'based on a true story' appear far more frequently than less watchable attempts to represent history without fictional embellishment.[51]

War games and computer simulations allow us to replay events or scenarios from the past and bring about different outcomes from the ones that happened.

Clearly some of this can be categorised as entertainment, but equally clearly, there is a new potential here for a more serious development of counterfactual history. Yet very often, such histories, as we have already seen, can slither down the slippery slope into mere wishful thinking. E. H. Carr indeed thought that counterfactualists were mostly engaged in 'settling old scores; indulging fantasies; … and above all, titillating those quintessentially counterfactual emotions of regret (over better worlds that almost were) and relief (over worse fates that we barely escaped)'. Such a charge could easily here be levelled against Carr himself in his own regret at Lenin's early death.[52] In his view, the future still belonged to a Soviet-style planned economy and Stalin had made the process of achieving it more difficult through his crimes. Counterfactuals about the past almost always have political implications for the present. These may be of various kinds. Gavriel Rosenfeld has argued that 'fantasy scenarios … tend to be liberal, for by imagining a better alternate past, they see the present as wanting, and thus implicitly support changing it'.[53] Yet in a place and time where liberalism or socialism or some other variety of non-conservative political doctrine, government, or system dominates, it will be conservatives who want to change it, as became clear in the United States during the presidency of Bill Clinton and in the UK under the premiership of Tony Blair.