The Dags of the Left

Diana Simmonds

The left, as we all know, is in retreat. The right — or the New Right — is in the ascendant. Indeed, to all intents and purposes, it has ascended.

It's not so much that the New Right is right and the left is suddenly wrong, it's more that the New Right has some style and excitement, as well as the occasional new thought — not including the ultra-stylish republished Ayn Rand — while the left, as ever, is wilfully, correctly, yawningly boring.

It's not that this time in history is especially at fault. It's been happening for a while: at least ten or fifteen years, but it has now reached crisis proportions.

The trouble is, the right is winning the battle for young hearts and minds in a way unprecedented since the '30s, Oswald Mosley and the Bright Young Things, who thought he and Hitler were a good thing ... well, frightfully chic, enigmatologically rearrangements of old cubes of thought when, in this vidiotronic, post-capitalist world, a new game is called for.

That brings me to the other most boring problem with the left: like the adherents of most hidebound and conservative religions, whether so-called Christian or marxist, many on the left are so terrified of letting go of the past, of old cubes of thought when, in this vidiotronic, post-capitalist world, a new game is called for.

Marx, Gramsci and all that lot would have been flattered, but surely very bored. That play didn't work. Let's stop trying to rewrite it and fiddle with key scenes. Let's write a new one.

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