

a theory of history

In the year 911, Rollo the Viking was given Normandy to keep other Vikings away. A century and a half later his descendent William the Conqueror came to England and made it his own. To this day, the English language bears the scars: *cow* in the field, but *bœuf* on the master's plate: we farm in English, but we serve in French.

After another century, the French Vikings came to Ireland. Wales held out longer, but fell in another century. The British East India Company is chartered in 1600. Scotland held until the Union of the Crowns in 1603. Jamestown, the first stone of the British Empire, was established 1607. In America, European serfdom gave way to outright slavery by 1640. Feudalism, with Saxon service to Norman lords, gave birth to the system which held until 1964. By 1760 the British had decided to rule India rather than trade with her, and a hundred years later, China also felt the whip. In a very real sense, the Norman Conquest never ended. The first multinationals were engines of Colonialism.

As the relative value of land to factories changed, a new struggle began: did political power (“class” being “closeness to the Crown”) attach to mere wealth, or to a privileged feudal bloodline? In the UK, class prevailed; in America, money. Brunel served, while Carnegie ruled. Romanticism is class war: nobility, feudalism, medievalism, mysticism. Class as a concept descends from feudalism, from nobility.

In the anglosphere, science does not carry status because engineers and industrialists lost to the Feudal powers. This pervasive trend keeps engineers out of government to this day, and influences public debate in areas like global warming and vaccination adoption: nobody believes nerds.

Cultures ruled by foreign powers for centuries do not pay their taxes. For centuries resistance to colonization often took the form of refusing to pay for one's own oppression. Greece, Ireland, India all cultivate cultures which refuse bureaucracy and taxation whenever possible, while the self-governing Germans and Swiss pay as a point of pride. Even after self-rule is restored, anti-tax culture lasts generations.

Similarly, the State is originally an economic structure: land generates wealth, taxation generates armies. As supply chains, value networks and infrastructure come to displace agriculture as the origin of wealth, State thinking lags in defining concepts like “territory.” Multinationals regulate and “tax” value networks and States fail to tax them in turn.

Because we do not update our institutional understanding fast enough, outdated economic geography and political economy dominate much State thinking. Even political parties split along Left/Right lines echo days when wealth came from factories. We still can't properly value patents.

Only a history written by and for the losers in the colonial struggles can explain the world most of us live in. *Nothing fades as fast as the future, nothing clings like the past.*