

MANAGING HATRED

'Half of All Politics is the Management of Hatred.'

Part 1

The emotional intelligence challenges in politics, media and business.

A suggested explanation for the confusion, distress and inadequacy of political, business and media leadership responses to the disruptive forces at work in politics, business and public life.

“ —

“I dreamed of enlarging Irish hate. All movements are held together more by what they hate than by what they love, for love separates and individualizes and quiets, but the nobler movements..., on which our literature can found itself, hate great and lasting things.”

W B Yeats, Essay ‘Poetry and Tradition’ 1907

— ”

This pamphlet is an argument for understanding, analysing and reacting to the role and the rise of emotional need and the new psychological levers in politics, of which hate is a permanent feature, which have to be actively managed.

A political party without an approach to managing hatred is like a country without a defence policy.

Politics has always mobilised and appealed to emotional needs, historically through the power of religion and nationalistic, tribal and class identity, and more recently race and gender. All of which have long-underlying hatreds of ‘others’ and track-records of outbursts of hatred.

The modern generation of political practitioners, advisers and leaders, in their disrupted political discomfort, seem unable to identify the current range of feeling in their electorates or respond effectively to them, instead clutching at ideas spun out of the basic belief that ‘it’s the economy, stupid’ and it will all come around eventually. It won’t; the political landscape has changed.

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Introduction

Why This Matters Now

Leadership in an age of emotional disruption

This first essay is about the current disruptions in politics, political parties and government in 2026.

These leadership challenges have huge impacts and implications for society, reflected also in leadership failings in business, media and institutions across charities, professional bodies, trade associations, NGOs, universities, quangos and churches – subjects for future expansion.

On 31st December 2025, George Parker in the Financial Times asked the question why the current polling showed that political leaders were not just suffering ‘midterm blues’ or the slide in popularity as difficult decisions were taken, but that polling showed the public had marched through all the emotions and turned to hatred of the main political leaders.

Part of the answer is that politicians have brought it upon themselves by lowering the bar and inviting personal hatred, not just enlightened disagreement, and not immediately challenging its sources in the culture of scandal and outrage and its rise in media reporting.

Yeilding to temptations of outrage, attention-seeking political strategists think they or their party colleagues can play with the fire of generating hatreds against their opponents and not get burned themselves.

Part of the answer must lie with leadership at all levels in politics, business, institutions and the media taking back control of their own temptations, evasions and behaviour, not just in politics. But politics is the place to start.

In the case of politics, government effectiveness, trust and respect must be rebuilt locally and regionally in order to reverse the hollowing-out of local, regional or state government of the 1980s-90s. Through the cumulative de facto nationalisations of education, FE, polytechnics, marketisations of maintenance contracts, roads, catering, transport, and adding remote and multiple regulator of the local and national public services that were once delivered and integrated by local government decision are now distant from people leaving them with no sense of control or agency.

In both the USA and the UK there are visible examples of the consequences of the leverage these policies give to populists and demagogs using hatreds as a tool.

A Reflection on Enoch Powell's Fall

A lesson from history

As we listen to the dog whistle of racist politics in the UK it is worth reflecting on what happened to Enoch Powell, former Conservative MP, within a week of his dog whistle speech appealing to racial division in 1968.

He was tempted to lower the bar and ride a source of hatred and division against immigrants. After one speech on race and immigration, with obscure references to 'rivers of blood', in an hotel room in Birmingham, he was immediately cast out of mainstream UK parliamentary politics – not by the House of Commons or the electorate but by his own Party Leader (Edward Heath MP) and the Conservative Party with the consent and support of a shocked Labour government and media. This was enough to drive him out of mainstream politics. Leaderships took a stand.

But why? Was it perhaps because that generation of politicians, from Edward Heath, (Conservative) to Denis Healy (Labour), Willie Whitelaw (Conservative) to Merlin Rees (Labour) and Jim Callaghan (Labour), had all fought in World War II?

They had seen the consequences of hatred against Jews, people of colour, gays, and trade unionists being allowed to rise in the form of European fascism, and acted swiftly?

They knew from the generational life experience of German Nazism and authoritarians in Italy and Japan, where those first dog whistles to bring forward hatred of others could and would lead.

Where is that clear resolve and collective political memory shown by the Conservatives back in the 1960s in our modern-day political party leadership?

Labour at that time also stood up to pressure from their own electorate, as trade unionised London dockers marched from the East End in support of Powell.

The lesson is that politicians at every level must not cower in front of newly emerging sources of hatreds but find ways to take charge of the debate: exercise their democratic mandate, take back control, connect with the electorate's concern; not dismiss them as 'deplorables' or as ignorant, but dictate the agenda with positive solutions, with counter arguments, with humour, ridicule and satire to show they can act with agency for their voters.

Contrast with Today

The loss of political memory in modern leadership

Coming to modern times, we do not have the embedded folk memory of the consequences of heightened feelings of hatred,

The current generation of young parliamentary leaders did not live through the political spasms of the 1970s and '80s in politics, business and the media, which – at all three levels – may help explain the increasingly unmanageable position of Prime Ministers and politicians in general described by George Parker.

It has become the common practice for senior political leaders to leave the House of Commons as soon as their office ends, taking with them insight, experience and the political folk memory essential for managing spasms of hatred.

In the spring of 2016, before the Brexit referendum, the word 'anger' was used by many commentators to describe the public mood of discontent and its growing electoral unpredictability – despite the trends of long-term low interest rates and economic stabilisation.

Across the Atlantic, Hillary Clinton let slip her confused view of Trump supporters as 'deplorables', betraying a failure by democrats to understand the cry for change and the desire to preserve a sense of security and identity that nearly always lies behind rising hatred.

The economic 'stabilisation' after 2008 led to static incomes and a growing cost of living crisis for many key groups, but not all – creating increasingly visible inequality.

Anger is a step up from the term '**alienated**' used earlier by commentators - 'alienated', with its connotations of confusion and inexplicable distance among the electorate.

Likewise, '**frustration**' – an uncomprehending rejectionist, kneejerk response by the confused and disappointed electorate to changes in their circumstances linked to the failures of politics and political institutions, not just on the economy.

The events up to 2024 turned from anger to exasperation, to frustration, to contempt and ridicule, through the premierships of Johnson and Truss in particular, and then continued to morph into hatred for all established politics, politicians, parliament and parties after 2024.

What I argue in this pamphlet is that what we are seeing is not just a reaction to economic events but the conscious, planned and deliberate manipulation of hatreds – developing modern social media management, and the manifestation of the electorate’s embedded insecurities and disappointed hopes, into ‘hatreds’ directed at the whole political system and leading politicians, through targeting groups and issues of state failure.

Agency

Economic vs Emotional Argument

Beyond economics: identity, agency and feeling

Mainstream party politicians in turn are failing to give enough people – a consenting majority, connected to their political leaders with trust – a sense of direction, economic and social security, respect or belonging, a sense of progress and moving forward, even in hard times.

This is identified as the absence of ‘**agency**’ by the pollster James Kanagasooriam.

A consenting majority is not the same as an electoral majority. Tony Blair won two elections in 2001 and 2005 on lower votes than Neil Kinnock mobilised in 1992, but he won because the consenting majority. That majority included many former Conservative voters who stayed at home, stayed out of the argument, and helped deliver electoral victory to Blair.

They consented. The 2024 election victory may have been ‘shallow’, but it was consented and those who dispute it or cower because of it play with fire with our constitutional structures.

Britain’s electoral system does not deliver simple 50%+ majority governments, they all govern from the votes of a minority of the voters but with the consent of a majority.

Consent requires the continuous monitoring and management, addressing and suppressing new and rising hatreds.

Brexit analysis

Brexit and the withdrawal of consent

In the Brexit referendum of 2016 – given a binary choice – large parts of the electorate withdrew their consent from all the Westminster parties and the current political settlement. They turned out in numbers (72%, the highest since the 78% turnout in 1992 general election) and used their vote to overturn the establishment political settlement that they felt did not work for them, their families, their local communities, their regions and their sense of identity.

They voted to turn out the political parties that they felt did not work for them and had let them down. The feeling was that ‘agency’ was being taken away by the EU.

The margins of change and choice that dictate winners and losers in UK politics (and are visible in the US and across European politics) became more dominated by how swing voters feel about the national candidates and the parties and the institutions (especially after the MPs expenses scandal) and the failure to anticipate and curb the excesses of banking before the 2008 crash.

This sense of identity, agency and respect competes with economics and other loyalties for the final choice – a choice that can be left to the day of the election and is no longer solely about ‘the economy, stupid’, the tribe, the class, the religion or other determinist theories.

The electorates’ emotional response has become critical to success. This was powerfully demonstrated in the EU referendum vote, as the final appeals of the Brexit campaign were to identity, issues of self and lack of faith that normal two-party voting could change things. The Brexit psychological appeal slogan moved from EU facts and claims focused on fishing, farming, immigration, to a general call connected to personal insecurity and lack of agency – to ‘take back control’.

As it has become more individualised in all its lifestyle, work and personal choices, so too has the electorate’s emotional discomfort become more open to transactional propositions. Emotional and psychological need has become the big new key variable in politics.

Political leaders without the emotional intelligence to complement political polling and economic intelligence will always get into difficulty.

The current generation of mainstream party leaders fail to demonstrate the emotional intelligence required to manage the hatred unleashed and managed by the new populists.

The Missing Link in Modern Political Strategy

To understand the concept of ‘agency’ and how the lack of it affects voting, the case is set out well in [Amol Rajan’s ‘Radical’ podcast on the BBC on why Agency could be the next big thing in politics](#) in March 2026.

James Kanagasooriam, the pollster from Focalddata, commented in the Times on 30th October 2025, in an article aiming to explain why the apparently outrageous and offensive things that Trump and Farage do, say and exude in their postures still work with their voters. He asserts that feelings do matter in politics:

“
Dismissing the power of humour and emotion in politics is to assume mistakenly that elections are a rational tessellation of policies and votes. But when a voter starts smiling at your image on a screen, with the sound on mute, you know you are watching electoral gold
”

Feelings and emotion are hard to measure and quantify but as a leading member of the new wave of pollsters, James Kanagasooriam recognises that these factors matter and are not understood well enough by the existing generation of political leaders outside the experimental disrupters – Farage has risen, to a degree, by political and social media trial-and-error but crucially by consistently appealing to emotional responses avoiding hard policy detail.

There is a shift in individual voting loyalty, paralleled in purchasing, business and family lifestyle choices which have been visible not just in politics but in so much of people’s choices of media, business suppliers, careers as well as voting. The signs were there to be seen – more fluid, more transactional, more personal image, more aspirational, more led by connection.

Tim Bell, the PR expert who campaigned for Margaret Thatcher, applied these lessons about new aspirational feeling in traditional Labour voters to great effect in 1979.

This fluidity in voting patterns is reflected in the collapse of media channel loyalty and fixed TV watching patterns collapsing, as business brand loyalty becomes less robust and can be punctured by feelings and values (from Gerald Ratner disparaging his jewellery products, to clothing and trainer brands found using child labour) as much as price, distribution and quality – the traditional guarantors of economic success.

What is surprising is that political strategists and commentators have not made the obvious connections between political insights and the social and marketing insights that are widely discussed and visible in new societal behaviour.

Economics and political science find these less tangible motivations difficult to measure or interpret.

Motivations

Cost of Living, Shame, and Fear

The limits of economic explanation

While economic conditions do still dictate many feelings and emotional attachments, as we are seeing in the fear factor and the shame-factor around the ‘cost of living crisis’, they do not direct them to established political parties or solutions to the previous degree expected by economic determinists.

A similar pattern is being repeated and experienced among leaderships in business and in the media where success and reputations swing at frightening speed often against the currents of economic predictability – economic success alone is no protection in office for business leaders or media editors. This is especially visible in the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter and transgender rights waves of protest which toppled many senior executives.

This pamphlet is an argument for hugely increased understanding, analysing and reacting to the role and the rise of emotional need and the new psychological levers in politics.

Politics has always mobilised and appealed to emotional needs, historically through the power of religion, race, nationalistic and class identity. All of which have long track records of outbursts of hatred and deliberate exploitation by political parties.

But the modern generation of political practitioners, advisers and leaders, in their discomfort, seem unable to identify the current range of feelings in their electorates or respond effectively to them with policies and campaigns that give a sense of agency.

Instead clutching at ideas spun out of the basic belief that ‘it is the economy stupid’ or a focus on ‘affordability’ or the cost of living, with small spreadsheet adjustments on various utility and retail taxes and expect that electorally it will all come around, eventually as the economy picks up.

The problem is that these fail to create what older observers called the ‘feel good factor’ or ‘sense of progress’ essential to wellbeing a sense that voting for established politicians and their parties is an act of agency that will make any difference.

Donald Trump

And the politics of humiliation

Donald Trump has raised and parleyed the sense of grievance in huge sections of the American electorate into hatreds for new and imagined groups of people at home and abroad.

Trump invites hatred, not just disagreement with his political opponents, on whom he sprays attacks unpredictably, at immigrants, prosecutors, universities, federal officials, often behaving in ways likely to be ruled illegal, outrageously, vindictively but then retracting, retreating, restarting, going round again, but clearly satisfying key parts of his coalitions lust for pain on opponents they are invited to hate and dominating the news round which they find this irresistible.

In the UK we look on at such uncivil behaviour and wonder why it works. One key factor is inflicting public pain. You have visible examples of the people Trump hates suffering pain, job losses, de funding and humiliation, and loss, from deportees seized off the street by ICE to University heads and foreign leaders humiliated, and cowering before the unpredictable power of the Presidential office. His base loves it. But playing with hatred may come back to bite him.

Entertainment, power and public punishment

People confused by Donald Trump's, uncivil, arrogant, cruel and unpredictable behaviour in front of the cameras should reference Alan Sugar, Chair of the UK version of the Apprentice, a model copied over the Atlantic with Donald Trump in the role of Sugar.

Consider the programme model. The entertainment is as much in the contestant's humiliation at the hands of the Chair, their fear of rejection, the unpredictable and sometimes bizarre projects they are given, the brutality of the chairman's criticisms and the abrupt despairing ending when they are fired.

There was and is a massive audience for this formula and it made Trump a national figure. Watching him exploit and feed their, insecurity, fear, fawning, deference, begging, and pain on rejection. An unforgiving model inflicting personal pain and anguish in a world full of ambitious people, on the make, and willing to do almost anything.

As Trump said in his infamous verbal hammering of President Zelinsky in the White House in early 2025 about who held the 'cards' in negotiation with Russia, 'This will make great television'. Something Trump and his team understands better than most.

Any resemblance to how Trump now treats world leaders for the entertainment of his political base or the fawning characters in his cabinet is surely not a coincidence.

Unpredictability, fear and control in leadership

Unpredictable, vindictive, and erratic behaviour is a common feature of authoritarian practices where heightened hatreds are a key part feeding their coalition and controlling other players.

From the culture wars of US politics on race and gender imported to the UK to the new 'dog whistles' of anti-immigration racism recently used in UK general elections and in the London Mayoral election in UK politics, **we have seen the left and social democratic parties across the developed and developing world failing as they find that narrow gradualist economic solutions alone are not sufficient for the emotional need for affirmation and identity and a sense of agency that now overlay economic position.**

At the same time, parts of the left in the Labour Party, the Greens and the SNP also prosper by reflecting those culture war models, demanding the cancellation of anyone who disagrees with them in a mirror of the old Stalinist communist purges or religious inquisitions and splits.

Those politicians on the left who have prospered recently often start as the outsiders. The comedian led 5 Star movement in Italy, developed a model of populist leftism. Podemos in Spain, and Momentum in the UK who work on the branch of hatred that starts with anti-establishment sneering, contempt for existing politicians, conspiracy theories, denial of complexity in politics, to the simplicities of the environmentalists and utopians culminating in Zarah Sultana in Your Party, engaging thousands of new disengaged voters in a few weeks or the recent rise in Green Party membership after the election of Zack Polanski.

Difficult as it is for many, it should also be recognised that Volodymyr Zelinsky was part of that successful new model, a comedian and actor who channelled the craving for a new identity and a rejection and hatred of the old pro Russian Ukrainian political models into his political success.

Emotional Insecurity

Marx, Religion & Attachments

Karl Marx railed against the power of religion, its emotional hold over people, and saw it as the 'opium of the people' aligning it to a drug that addled their brain and made them stupid.

Marx like his modern followers, failed to realise the important emotional role religion played in how working class, bourgeois and middle class people held their families and sense of wellbeing together and coped with everyday life and its vagaries of disease and death. The realities of precarious family life which communism had few practical solutions that were any different from the liberal calls for schooling, clean water, pensions and factory acts and working hours - as though that was enough.

Misunderstanding, misreading or underestimating the power of emotional attachments, a sense of identity, has been a consistent failure of key strands of the left throughout its distinct 19th and early 20th century history with only the Italian Gramsci showing some recognition of emotional attachment as he observed the powerful complexity of Italian interlocked cultural institutions and respected its power and function – working on how to 'march through the institutions' as a means to power. A lesson best learned by Ken Livingstone and his followers in his political leadership in London over 3 decades.

The emotional insecurity of disruptive events, change and challenge has challenged both governments dominated by the left and the right in the past 20 years - the rise of modernised hatreds producing authoritarian responses, new forms of inter European racism and violent recourse as institutions fail - as we saw, with terrible consequences in the Balkans in the 1990s after the collapse of the communist Yugoslavia.

Sometimes they are driven by new left looking movements which, in Greece in economic crisis and Catalonia in nationalist surge in Spain, sweep aside and displace traditional social democratic parties.

Not understanding the emotional insecurities they were playing with, they are vulnerable to backlash when they take their first hard decision or think they can break local or international law, the rules of economics and agreements, with impunity. In both cases they were forced to turn back to more social democratic solutions.

Current UK Politics

The Fragility of Modern Governance

The question in the UK is whether mainstream parties can counter these heightened emotions with a new settlement or whether we have to go through a cycle of populist government and failure to find a new political settlement.

It is a common observation about Scottish politics that while the SNP had a working majority government or a coalition from 2007 to today in 2026, they consistently avoided taking hard reform decisions on difficult issues in health, education, universities energy, defence, constantly focussing on the emotional appeal of nationalism and independence without stepping over the legal or fiscal line, and yet when they did go out on a limb on gender recognition it blew up in their face.

A phenomenon we now see in the current Labour party difficulties with welfare reform in 2025 and immigration reform in 2026 as it tries to take difficult but necessary decisions when backbenchers cannot cope with the push back from charities and media that feels like hatred.

They are not emotionally confident in their power to govern.

In Place of Fear

Aneurin Bevan and the politics of emotional security

In business it is often said that the only drivers of change that matter are ‘fear and greed’ that every other buy and sell motivation derives from these.

So it is notable that Aneurin Bevan called his influential 1952 text ‘In Place of Fear’ his solution included maintaining a free NHS, a universal state economic solution to health affordability, but also a recognition that the problem reached to a different and intolerable level in the emotional despair of people about the lack of access to healthcare for them and their families at the point of need when others could have paid for access to care.

It was an emotional appeal that even the most powerful forces of self interest in insurance, the BMA the media and the medical hospital establishment could not ultimately counter.

The setting up of the NHS gave voters a huge sense of agency, that what they voted for mattered to them, was their leverage, something that lasted generations for Labour. As did Mrs Thatcher’s sale of council houses create for many voters from 1980 to this day.

It is an irony that many of the great district general hospitals created to fulfil Bevan’s vision were built in the 1950s under the direction of the health minister – Enoch Powell MP.

As minister for health, Powell also invited many of the first commonwealth doctors and nurses to come to the UK to fill the new posts.

Consensus and consent were built across parties despite deep racism on the ground and Powell was part of that consensus till the temptations and frustrations of politics led him to play with legitimising racism in the late 1960s.

US Healthcare & Fear of Loss

When rational policy meets emotional resistance

In the USA on the other hand the efforts of both Hilary Clinton first in the 1990s and President Obama later to reform US healthcare were met by opponents not just with an economic argument - which is overwhelming and economically dominant in favour of their healthcare reform - but to opposition which mobilised the emotional fear and insecurity in the prosperous, protected middle class.

Fear of Loss: Middle-class backlash

The US middle classes, including many unionised industries, had existing expensive but top-quality health contracts, building to a fear and hatred for reformers among those with good health care insurance -fearful that they might lose out, be diluted and have to get in the exaggerated queue associated with the UK NHS.

Hatred can be generated around issues not confined to the victims of economic hardship but also among beneficiaries holding on to current benefits.

Consider the reaction of prosperous house owners to any suggestion of social care plans for dementia or residential care affecting their housing assets and inheritance, an issue currently breaking the budgets of UK local government.

An issue which helped defeat both Gordon Brown in 2010 with accusations of a death tax and undermine Teresa May's re-election in 2017 with calls of a dementia tax.

The emotional opposition in the USA became so powerful that it defeated Hillary and Bill Clinton in the 1990s, as she tragically miscalculated the emotional discomfort her proposals created and famously failed to create emotional capital to get enough medical opinion on her side against the insurers and the profiteers to reassure the emotionally insecure middle classes and build trust for the majority needed for change.

She was to repeat this mistake again in her 2016 run for president when she described opponents' voters as 'deplorables', a contempt which cost her votes and perhaps even the election for President.

This was despite the overwhelming economic case espoused by many, including the likes of Chrysler who claimed their business model was being drowned by the costs of their own staff health insurance scheme which had become \$1500 of the cost of a car compared to \$200 for Toyota. It was about more than 'the economy, stupid'.

A continuing anti-Obama medical reforms campaign supported by Donald Trump, with his cuts to Obama Care in the Big Beautiful Bill – a cut he might now find is a cut too far because of the emotional as well as financial security and attachment he is trying to take away.

US Healthcare & Fear of Loss

When rational policy meets emotional resistance

Bevan makes his argument in terms of emotional comfort and wellbeing in the chapter on health:

“—
| ***“Society becomes more wholesome, more serene, and spiritually
healthier, if it knows that its citizens have at the back of their
consciousness the knowledge that not only themselves, but all their
fellows, have access, when ill, to the best that medical skill can
provide.”*** |—”

The fear of losing the free to access NHS remains an anchor for the Labour Party in British Politics, indeed at one point before 1992 it was the only issue on which the Labour Party led in polling.

To this day Labour is never slow to invite passionate local hatred, rather than discussion, for any party who contemplate a change even to models of health care devised by other Labour and social democrats around the world.

Through the late 1970s race debates. In the divisive Labour deputy leadership election and on into the miners' strike, the HIV panic and section 28 law an older political generation witnessed the emergence of the tools of the new cancel culture in slogan worship, deselection, exclusion, calls for sacking, othering and violent hate speech not seen since the 1930s.

Today's battle of these are less faith, religion and industrial and more gender, identity, equality and still race, Thirty years after the experience of the 1970s and 80s between 2007 and 2015 the modern Conservative party under David Cameron attempted to catch up and embraced many of these equality and gender movements to help end its perception as the 'nasty party',

In Scotland Ruth Davidson, the openly lesbian Conservative leader, signalling a new tolerance restored the Scottish Conservatives to the official opposition in Holyrood with a combination of policy, economic, emotional, likeability and identity appeal that helped consign Scottish Labour to third place in the parliament and its worst vote since 1918.

Why Hatred.

The left and social democrats have no automatic ownership of identity issues

Hatred never calls itself hatred, it always has another name and self-justification.

Hatred has clear patterns of portrayals of insiders and outsiders, them and us, a suggested grievance, a perceived injustice, or conspiracy pointed at a particular group of people usually at a distance.

Often never the people near you or who you work with or depend on for NHS treatment, an imagined or genuine grievance combined with an elastic slogan or demand, which cannot be met by any authority or legal institutions or met without disruption, pain, or injustice to 'the other'. 'From the river to the sea' 'Build a wall' are recent examples of such slogan as empty vessels of threat to others.

Why Hatred.

Why ‘hatred’ – why not any of the other range of emotions that we feel; alienation, anger, frustration, isolation, disempowerment, contempt, envy, greed, jealousy that have been used to describe the powerful emotions on show over the spring of 2016 and in the following decade to our present position in 2026

Because, whatever the starting point, it feels like hatred when you are on the receiving end of it.

To defeat hatred, you not only have to recognise it in other players but resist its temptations in your own response.

Hatred does not rise accidentally as Yeats admits.

“
| ***‘I dreamed of enlarging Irish hate. All movements are held together more
by what they hate than by what they love, for love separates and
individualizes and quiets, but the nobler movements, on which our
literature can found itself, hate great and lasting things’***
—”

Yeats’ admission of his role in creating and nursing a hatred and identity in the Irish independence movement is a reminder that these are not ‘unintended consequences’, or accidental events that fall upon us in accidental waves of passion but that they are driven by the conscious actions of individuals pursuing a goal (in his case Irish independence) which might then interact with a major disruption like World War I.

While Yeats may have latterly distanced himself from the unintended consequences of growing a hatred the lesson is there of the long-lasting damage that can be done and was done to Irish politics right through to is reassertion in violence in Northern Ireland in 1970-1990s.

Yeats and his colleagues were trying to emulate the cultural back story created around the unification of Germany. A lesson observed by Hugh MacDiarmid as he went on to work to create a cultural renaissance and language anchor for Scottish language, then a new Scots identity, then Scottish nationalism in the 1920s onward.

In the House of Commons there are two yellow lines in the carpet, the Sword Line, separating the members of parliament, as a reminder of the hatreds that could spill over but must not step 'over the line', a reminder that the House of Commons is an institution, like most political institutions and parliaments created at its core to manage hatred after a war, civil war or civil unrest expressed through parties and institutions with two sides.

Much of the process of legislation is testing proposals to see what reaction they provoke and then managing that reaction, whether it is on Abortion, Fracking, a third Heathrow runway , HS2, small boats, deportations all of which provoke strong feelings capable of spilling over into hatred, as we have seen, in the summer of 2025 with hotel riots over immigration.

Social Change & Fragmentation

Modern life and the fragmentation of society

The other co-terminus contributor to emotional disruption in the electorate, a loss of a sense of belonging, was that family life, relatives, work, education, health no longer resided within the boundaries of small districts and city councils as they had in the 1950s, where schools were local for everyone, except the extremely rich, hospitals were on your doorstep in local infirmaries and maternity hospitals, where midwives, district nurses and health visitors worked for the council and really could get everywhere on a bicycle as in *Call the Midwife*.

The motor car, longer travel to work options, moving house to chase school admissions, local closure of outdated local hospitals and infirmaries in favour of larger distant district hospitals all changed where people looked for answers to their public service reforms. A change not yet recognised in the structure of the main political parties which hang on to the old constituency post codes.

By 1997 most working people did not depend on their local district council for anything other than litter collection, planning consent, street lighting, parking, road humps, potholes and low traffic neighbourhoods, many of which are also a constant source of local grievance.

People now form their community online through Facebook groups, WhatsApp's, speaking to other people 'like them', no longer follow one newspaper according to their demographic, income or educational achievement.

We Have Been Here Before

The current generation of politicians have little working folk memory, resilience or political experience of this since they were not around in the previous worst emotional spasm of polarisation and cancel culture from 1977 to 1985 when the left's weaponising of elastic slogans such as 'by any means necessary' as the cry of anti-racism purists to justify violence, anti-fascist campaigners, direct action opponents of cruise missiles at Greenham Common and in some industrial actions around Wapping and the miners' strike.

Shared experience of the techniques used by supporters of Arthur Scargill, inviting people to hate the Nottingham Miners who refused to strike without a ballot, Liverpool and Lothian councillors who promoted 'can't pay won't' rates rebellions on services cuts, a cry now seen being picked up by some in Reform in councils not scheduled to be holding elections in 2026 or toying with boycotting the payment of the BBC licence fee – all stepping over the line.

The 1980s also saw campaigns about universities that would be familiar today with right wing calls to punish universities and polytechnics close student unions, accusations of preventing free speech in universities and disband the NUS. Episode of South African speakers being disrupted, nearly turning over the car of Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary at Warwick University and someone spraying Micheal Heseltine, a government minister, with red paint at Manchester University. All of which now seem familiar again.

An outrage cycle that only receded when leaders stood up to them, including Neil Kinnock's famous denunciation of the Liverpool councillors in 1985, or when Scargill had clearly led the miners up a cul de sac, or conservative libertarians overreached themselves.

Overreach is the common factor, like today's cancel campaigns with their loud intolerance and offensiveness as when Conservative students offended for all to see with 'hang Nelson Mandela' t-shirts, a step too far for Conservative chairman, Norman Tebbit and they, the Federation of Conservative Students were disbanded and right-wing cancellation campaigns withered.

The right is as capable of policy missteps as the left, not seeing where intolerance leads to hatreds unleashed. Much of the current missteps on trans right after all started under Teresa May and the Conservatives trying not to be the 'nasty party'.

What Now?

Personal Political Choices

Yeats' choice confronts all active political leaders. You must manage your own handling of created and embedded social hatreds or regret the consequences.

The lesson is do not create or encourage hatreds for you do not know where they will lead, except that it will not be good.

Hatred cannot be abolished only managed.

Leaders need teams around them as committed to spotting and managing rising sources of hatred as pursuing the 'shining city on the hill' and plaudits for reform and liberation.

Enoch Powell was ostracised by his own party, but the issue he raised and the discontent that could turn to hatred he legitimised (opened the Overton Window wider) and as we can see is again growing, is always there and needs to endlessly be worked on.

Hatreds will rise from many sources over the coming years.

- The starting point for anyone aspiring to political leadership is a recognition that the forces and risks of hatred rising are a permanent feature of political life and it is the function of healthy political parties and institutions to manage and channel solutions to address those constructively.
- Current party-political structures are outdated and unable to cope with capture by active groups building on hatreds.
- If you want to be an effective politician half your work will be managing hatreds of one kind or another in your daily experience.
- Politicians and media commentators need to look in the mirror and take the Yeats lesson for themselves before they reach into the toolkit of encouraging and riding hatred narrative under the pretence of 'only asking' or 'expressing concern'.
- Hatreds need to be challenged and managed and listened to for what may be a legitimate insecurity or fear behind them when they do appear not dismissed as 'deplorables'.

- Political leaders need to recognise that these hatreds will come in new forms and attach themselves to new issues as we have seen on Europe, gender issues, small boats, shoplifting and now migrant hotels – and those who play with and promote hatred are getting better at it and have new social media to bypass societies old media gatekeepers of behaviour.
- Healthy politics needs leaders who manage their own insecurities, temptations and hatreds to generate or fight back against hatred with humour, connectedness to the issue, ridicule, facts and confident leadership.

This is why in practice ‘half of all politics is the management of hatred’ and that we are in a period of comprehensive failure by leading individuals, parties, the media, business and national institutions to assert enlightenment principles and analyse, contain, explain, address and meet any genuine grievances underneath that create opportunities for emotional discomfort to turn to hatred.

The Failure of Leadership Through Process

In politics, business and the media people in leadership positions have devalued the implicit and explicit trust given to them when they were put in charge.

They have deferred to the curse of process whether HR, enquiries, investigations, suspensions, anything to push the issue away from them instead of asserting leadership and defending enlightenment principles of whether there is enough prima facie evidence for action, a presumption of innocence otherwise the process becomes weaponised and becomes a judgement and punishment through process.

Politicians should not defer to the unelected stakeholder state network of regulators, charities, interest groups empowered by judicial review, and activist lawyers which frustrate urgent measure to nip new hatred in the bud or amplify then for their own interests.

In business chief executives should not defer leadership on identity issues to HR, PR and Lawyers instead of acting decisively on clear warning signals of rising or manipulated hatreds.

In churches, charities, professional bodies leaders should not accept historic trust lost in deference to imported 'values' diverting from their original or core mission or values, abandoning leadership to PR and HR advisers and safeguarding frameworks, to process anything to put off taking charge of a transparently unjust, unscientific, illegal or absurd situations.

Managing Hatred as the Core Task of Leadership

And why political parties must restructure

Hatred is an emotional response now back disfiguring politics, business, our institutions and the media and the pushback needs to start with politicians and leaders in all parties.

The need to lead and to act with robust emotional intelligence as well as economic competence and professional standards, to combat manipulations of the emotions leading to hatred through obsessions with process and working to creating new more direct connections to their populations and audiences on which trust is based.

In politics this can now only be delivered locally and regionally with new generation leaderships coming through elected mayors and councils with the size, economic and budget strength to make change happen, take back control from national government on a wide range of public services and public goods.

New local leaderships are showing signs they can command consent and trust to reinvigorate the leadership and civil conduct of political decision making.

New local leaders are showing that they can meet the electoral craving for a sense of agency by clever positive measures, as small as Andy Burham's £1.40 bus fares and integrated Bee Line routes in Manchester, or Boris Bikes in London (actually devised by Ken Livingston).

If Labour and Conservative are to reinvent themselves, they need to make big policy changes and retail offers giving agency to the electorates votes to counter the hollow populism of the extremes who ride genuine as well as invented grievances.

Actions and tangible actions that create a sense of agency in voting positively, and results not just promises and assertions that 'our values are better than their values'.

A connection to local issues, and a localisation of national institutions is necessary to recreate a trust and sense of agency in voting, that challenges pushes empty populism back out of its current surge with policy action and connection.

We can see a better identity model emerging in localities and regions around elected mayors, parliaments and assemblies and mainstream parties.

National mainstream centrist politics needs to take this on board and come up with answers to make electors feel back in control and that can only be done locally by restructuring the state and reversing the nationalisations, regulations and marketisations of the Thatcher and Blair years.

Political parties need to urgently restructure away from the 1950s-based constituency model of operation to better manage and channel hatred, with resilient structures, support for their elected representatives and build more connected, local and regional identities rather than the myths of connection built around the existing parliamentary constituency which has lost its local connection to so many electors.

Neil Stewart | April 2026

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