The Probable Extinction of Science and of Modern Social and Political Ideas with Technological Civilisation.

By

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Abstract.

This paper will argue that, given the demise during the remainder of the 21st Century of global capitalism and of the global technological civilisation that is its corollary, it is not to be reasonably expected that scientific ideas, as they have been known since the 17th Century, and the science based on them, or post-Enlightenment social and political ideas, will survive that demise. Already, it must be noted, scientific ways of thinking, and liberal (or 'woke') political perspectives are being increasingly challenged by an ever-more energised and fervent populist Right on a global scale. The Trump Administration's recent attacks on academia and scientific research in the United States may be seen as an extension of this trend, as may the Republican-inspired banning of books in American school districts.

Keywords: civilisational collapse; science; scientific ideas; scientific research; scientific discoveries; technology; capitalism; post-Enlightenment social and political ideas; populist Right; Trump Administration; academia; American school book bans.

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1. Introduction.

Karl Marx (1859 [1]) tells us that:

> **'In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.'**

This is, of course, the famous distinction between the 'economic base' and the 'ideological and political superstructure' (see Onishi 2015 [2]). Marx (1847 [3]) illustrates the technological determinism implied by this distinction succinctly:

> **'In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill**

> **gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist.'**

However, technological change is not *sui generis* – and nor does it happen in some kind of vacuum. The steam mill could not have been produced without the Scientific Revolution of the 17th Century, and *that*, in its turn, could not have happened without the Renaissance and the Reformation that preceded it, and the invention of the printing press, which enabled printed books to become widely available at reasonable prices to the educated public (Boas 1962 [4]; Hall 1963 [5]; Eistenstein, 1978 [6]; Vasoli 1979 [7]; Hookyaas 1987 [8]). The 'ideological and political superstructure' (*ideologische und politische überbau*) is no mere epiphenomenon: it can, and does, affect the economic base. Manna (2024 [9]) discusses Weber's views on this, in comparison to those of Marx. As Manna says:

> **'Weber... emphasized the importance of understanding society through the subjective meanings that individuals attach to their actions... [he]... argue[d] that to fully comprehend social phenomena, sociologists must consider the intentions, beliefs, and values that guide human behavior. Weber proposed that social actions are not merely reactive or deterministic responses to external stimuli but are driven by the meanings individuals ascribe to them' (p.486).**

This 'interpretive sociology' is in strict contrast to Marx's deterministic approach. Manna continues:

> **'Weber's emphasis on subjective meaning highlights the complexity of human behavior and the necessity of**

> **understanding the context and motivations behind actions...' (ibid.).**

Manna then summarises (ibid.) Weber's understanding of the four types of social action: instrumentally rational (*zweckrational*), referring to behaviour oriented towards achieving specific goals efficiently and effectively, with careful consideration of means and ends; value-rational (*wertrational*), which is social action guided by ethical, religious or cultural values, irrespective of consequences; affectual, which is action driven by emotions and feelings, reflecting spontaneous and expressive behaviour; and finally, traditional social action, which is 'rooted in established customs and habits' and performed without conscious deliberation.

As Manna says (op.cit., pp.486-7), citing Weber (1920; 2011 [10; citation below differs from Manna's]), Weber claimed that

> **'certain aspects of Protestantism, particularly Calvinism, played a crucial role in the development of capitalist culture. He posited that the Protestant ethic, with its emphasis on hard work, frugality, and a sense of calling, fostered an environment conducive to capitalist enterprise. The religious duty to pursue one's calling with discipline and efficiency aligned well with the demands of a capitalist economy, encouraging individuals to engage in economic activities not just for material gain but as a form of spiritual fulfillment.'**

We see echoes of this now in the so-called 'prosperity gospel' favoured by many American evangelicals (Machado 2010 [11]). As Machado says (p.729):

> **'In the prosperity gospel... we find a clear connection between capitalism and Evangelicalism. [This] blend[s] a belief in the power of the individual with the idea that a capitalist society provides equal opportunity for all, and hold[s] a very strong work ethic combined with a conviction that prosperity is part of God's design for humanity. This type of Christianity is not about sacraments and does not focus on a life beyond death; it does not seek to address social ills or social injustices, and does not question or critique any type of economic or government policy.'**

Manna (ibid.) notes of Weber's ([10]) thesis:

> **'[He] identified capitalism as part of a broader historical process of rationalization, where traditional modes of life and thinking give way to rational, calculative ones. Rationalization refers to the increasing reliance on reason, logic, and systematic procedures in various aspects of social life. In the economic realm, this manifests as the pursuit of efficiency, predictability, and control through scientific and technological advancements.'**

Rationalisation extends far beyond economics, as Manna argues, 'affecting even religious practices', and

> **'leading to the disenchantment of the world [*die entzauberung der Welt*], where traditional beliefs and magical elements are progressively eroded. For Weber, the hallmark of modernity is this shift towards rationalization, which transforms societal institutions and individual behavior, making them more methodical and goal oriented (Weber 1922; 1978 [12]).'**

This process of secularisation (*Säkularisierung*) accelerated after the 18th Century Enlightenment, and throughout the course of the 19th Century, as industrialisation progressed, following the Industrial and Agrarian Revolutions of the preceding century (Martin 1969 [13]). The link between 17th Century Puritanism and later capitalism and industrialisation was also noted by Merton (1938; 1970 [14]; see Nelson 1972 [15]). To quote Merton, p.xix (cit. Nelson, p.228):

> **'The substantial and persistent development of science occurs only in societies of a certain kind, which provide both cultural and material conditions for that development. This becomes particularly evident in the early days of modern science before it was established as a major institution with its own presumably manifest value.'**

Again, it was Weber who provided an answer to the question of what kind of society, and what sort of religion proved amenable to the development of industrial capitalism, and the science and technology necessary to it.

2. Weber On Why Industrial Capitalism Needed Christianity.

In [10], Weber tells us the reason industrial capitalism arose in Europe, as opposed to, say, India or China, was because of the ethos of Christianity, and specifically, *Protestant* Christianity.

> **'[T]he germs of modern capitalism must be sought in a region where officially an economic theory was dominant distinct from the economic theory of the East and of classical Antiquity, and, in principle strongly**

> **hostile to capitalism. The *ethos* of the religion-based economic morality is summed up in the old judgment passed on the merchant, which was probably taken from primitive Arianism: *homo mercator vis aut nunquam potest Deo placere* [the merchant may conduct himself without sin but cannot be pleasing to God]. This proposition was valid down to the fifteenth century... The development of the concept of the *calling* first gave to the modern entrepreneur a fabulously clear conscience – and also to industrious workers. The employer gave to his employees – as the wages for their ascetic devotion to the calling and for agreeing to his ruthless utilization of them through capitalism – the prospect of eternal salvation... in the Protestant ascetic communities admission to the Lord's Supper depended on ethical fitness, which in turn was identified with business respectability – while no one inquired into the substance of one's belief. Such a powerful, unconsciously refined organization for the production of capitalist individuals has never existed in any other church or religion; in comparison with it what the Renaissance did for capitalism shrinks into insignificance' (Appendix I, pp.254-255).**

As to the crucial issue of the relationship between Protestantism, capitalism, science and technology, Weber has this to say (p.255):

> **'Almost all of the great scientific discoveries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries grew on the soil of Catholicism: Copernicus was a Catholic, while Luther and Melancthon repudiated his discoveries... The Catholic church has indeed occasionally inhibited scientific progress; however, the ascetic sects of**

> **Protestantism have also wished to know little about pure science – except when it addressed the real needs of daily life. Protestantism's unique achievement was to have placed science in the service of technology and the economy.'**

Here, Weber somewhat downplays the inhibitory role regarding scientific progress of the Catholic Church, if anything. Its silencing of Galileo, and placing of his books on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* until the beginning of the 19th Century, and Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus Errorum*, can hardly have promoted scientific discovery in Catholic majority countries (Finocchiaro 2008 [16]; Pope Pius IX 1864 [17]; Hess and Allen 2008 [18]; Liana 2025 [19]). This was the Church that burned Giordano Bruno at the stake in the Campo Fiori in Rome on 17th February 1600 for proclaiming, *inter alia*, that the Earth moved about its own axis and orbited the Sun; that the universe was infinite; and was filled with a plurality of inhabited worlds (see Yates 1964 [20], pp.266-268, 270, 384; Bruno was an advocate of Hermetic magic, not experimental science, as Yates notes, but he was an opponent of the dogmatic authority of the Church and of the Bible, and, *eo ipso*, a champion of free thought).

Weber's argument was echoed to a degree, but also criticised (see below) by the British economic historian and Christian socialist, RH Tawney (Tawney 1926; 1984 [21]).

3. Criticism of Weber's Thesis.

Weber's thesis has not been without its critics, both during his lifetime and subsequently, but first of all it should be noted that what he is talking about is *industrial*, as opposed to *mercantile*, capitalism. The former depends on a level of technology of sufficient sophistication to enable a division of labour (Smith

1776; 2014 [22]), and cannot be conducted without such a division.

Weber's rival in sociology, Durkheim, wrote on the subject of the division of labour (Durkheim 1893; 1984 [23]). In Durkheim's view, the division of labour normally led to social solidarity, but there was a pathological form, which produced *anomie* (from Greek, *anomos*, 'lawlessness'; see Merton 1938 [24]). Durkheim lists three causes of this phenomenon, although he acknowledged that this was not exhaustive. His list included industrial or commercial crises, and bankruptcies; hostility between labour and capital (p.292); and the division of science into multiple separate disciplines (pp.293-294), where he says:

> **'Up to very recent times, science, not being very much divided, could be studied almost in its entirety by one and the same person. Thus there was a very strong feeling of unity about it. The particular truths of which it was made up were neither so numerous nor so heterogeneous that the link that united them... could not be easily discerned. The methods, being themselves very general, differed very little from one another, and one could perceive the common trunk from which they imperceptibly began to diverge. But as specialisation was introduced into scientific work each scientist shut himself off increasingly, not only within a particular science, but within a particular kind of problem.'**

Irrespective of the validity of Durkheim's views on these three points, it should be pointed out that Weber's theory utilised methodological individualism (Watkins 1952 [25]), as opposed to Durkheim's methodological collectivism or holism (Zahle 2023 [26]). The former finds favour in economics, especially of the neo-classical variety (Hodgson 2007 [27]) and provides

the rationale for sociological research employing qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, methods (Hansen 2010 [28]). As Hodgson, op.cit., points out, the term 'methodological individualism' was coined by Weber's student, Joseph Schumpeter, in 1908, in German, and then in English the following year ([28], p.1; Schumpeter 1909 [29]).

Mercantile capitalism predates the industrial form by centuries, and can be traced back to the Italy of the Middle Ages, constituting a 'Commercial Revolution' predating the Industrial one by half a millennium (see Reinert and Fredona 2017 [30]).

Fischoff (1944 [31]) gives us a broad history of the controversy regarding Weber's thesis, at least until 1944; Dong (2023 [32]) provides a valuable, and more recent, critique, which might satisfy some of those who have accused Weber of 'Eurocentricity' (see Duchesne 2002 [33] pp.33-35).

Perhaps the most substantial criticism, by far, of Weber's thesis is the historical fact that the Industrial and Agrarian Revolutions did not take place in any Lutheran or Calvinist countries of continental Europe, but in 18th Century Protestant England – the England of latitudinarian bishops, with their horror of 'enthusiasm' (Cragg 1960 [34], p.14). Cragg notes, however (pp.133-136), that:

> **'The dissenters... were active in business, and many of them prospered, and to Quaker enterprise some of the great banking houses in England owe their existence. In science and invention, the nonconformists also played an important part... Differences among the various nonconformist bodies were not pronounced... In higher education the dissenters made a genuine contribution to national life. Oxford and Cambridge excluded all save Anglicans... the dissenting academies probably provided the best education available in**

> **England. The curriculum was flexible, and included subjects elsewhere neglected, such as science, geography, and modern languages.'**

Some of the English nonconformists *were* Calvinist in theology, but many, and perhaps most (in contrast to the Scottish Presbyterians), were not. As Bainton (1964; 1967 [35], p.199) informs us:

> **'Comparatively speaking the [18th] century was an age of toleration. In England, the dissenters suffered from only legal disabilities. They were excluded from public life, but could obviate the rule by the compromise of taking Communion once in their lives in the Anglican Church. They could not take degrees at the universities, but the academies, which they themselves founded, so excelled the universities that Angliccans sent their sons to them to be educated.'**

As to the effect of the Enlightenment, and of industrialisation and its concomitant secularisation, Royle (1971 [36]), p.4) has this to say about the Religious Census taken on Sunday 30th March 1851 (incidentally the year of that showcase of the Industrial Revolution, the Great Exhibition, opened at the Crystal Palace, then in Hyde Park, by Queen Victoria on the 1st May):

> **'out of a total of thirteen and a half million people who could have been expected at church on Census Sunday, 30th March 1851, only seven and a quarter million were calculated to have actually attended.'**

A less than 46.3% rate of church attendance was not good news for any of the denominations, implying a ~53.7% rate of *non-*

attendance. As Royle argues (pp.5-6), this was not really the result of theoretical secularism, the open 'avow[al of] atheistical or deistical sentiments', in the words of the Reverend JF Whitty of St Mary's, Sheffield, more the result of the practical kind, of being 'too preoccupied with the immediate requirements of material existence' to have much time or energy left over for the spiritual. As Royle also says, the most prevalent form of opposition to religion was anticlericalism, which was fed as much by Christians as non-Christians (ibid.).

To summarise: Protestantism gave birth to modern applied science and technology, and to modern industrial capitalism, but it also contained within it the seeds of the destruction of those things, as we shall see.

4. The Industrial and Agrarian Revolutions in the Eighteenth Century.

There are a number of key figures in the 18th Century Industrial and Agrarian Revolutions, of whom we may note the following: James Hargreaves (1720-1778); Josiah Wedgewood (1730-1795); Richard Arkwright (1732-1792); James Watt (1736-1819) and Samuel Crompton (1753-1827).

To quote Allen (2009 [37], p.901):

> **'The Industrial Revolution was summarised by TS Ashton in the words of the famous schoolboy: "About 1760 a wave of gadgets swept over England." Some gadgets are well known (the spinning jenny, the water frame, the steam engine), and others less so... Much has been learned about these inventions, but the central questions remain: Why did the gadgets sweep over England rather than the Netherlands or France or, for that matter, China or India? And why were these**

> **technologies invented in England rather than elsewhere? Why, in other words, was the Industrial Revolution British?'**

Allen claims that Britain had a high wage economy which led to a demand for technology substituting capital for labour (p.903), and dismisses Weber's thesis. It has to be asked, however, 'Who benefited from this?' Clearly, the owners of capital, and not those who had to sell their labour in order to provide for themselves and their families.

Munro (2011 [38]) gives a clear account of the impact of Calvinism in England regarding the view taken of 'usury', or the charging of interest on loans, from the 16th Century to the Industrial Revolution. See also George (1957 [39]). This is obviously of great importance for the development of any sort of viable capitalism. Nelson (1947 [40], p.106) informs us of just how difficult the Church was finding it to reconcile its teaching on usury with the realities of economic life by the time of the Second Council of Lyons in 1274.

Tawney ([21], op.cit.) explains the meaning of 'usury' as:

> **'Not only the taking of interest for a loan, but the raising of prices by a monopolist, the beating down of prices by a keen bargainer, the rack-renting of land by a landlord, the sub-letting of land by a tenant at a rent higher than he himself paid, the cutting of wages and the paying of wages in truck, the refusal of discount to a tardy debtor, the insistence on unreasonably good security for a loan, the excessive profits of a middleman' (p.153).**

Furthermore, as he points out (p.158):

> **'The Bible, the Fathers and the Schoolmen, the decretals, church councils, and commentators on the canon law – all these, and not only the first, continued to be quoted as decisive on questions of economic ethics by men to whom the theology and government of the mediaeval Church were an abomination.'**

So, what changed? Again, as Tawney explains (p.163):

> **'The opinion of the practical man on questions of economic conduct was in the sixteenth century in a condition of even more than its customary confusion. A century before, he had practised extortion and been told that it was wrong; for it was contrary to the law of God. A century later, he was to practise it and be told that he was right; for it was in accordance with the law of nature.'**

Samuel (1966 [41], p.590) informs us that:

> **'Weber was fully aware of the anti-economic bias of early Puritanism, but he astutely noted that this bias was conditional on people's motives for economic success and on what they did with the tangible fruits of such success. Under conditions that conformed to Puritan theological demands, economic involvement elicited strong approval rather than censure.'**

He notes that Puritanism was the only ideology that could legitimise opposition to both Church and State effectively (p.591) and that it attracted a wide variety of lay participation because of its stress on lay participation in religious policymaking (pp.591-592).

Bendix (1967 [42]) says (p.295):

> **'The division of labor necessarily restricts the understanding of those who specialize. In so doing it also increases their productivity and the wealth of the country. Hence, private ends, a lack of concern for public welfare, and public benefits go together... By only attending to his business, each man is distinguished by his calling and has a place to which he is fitted.'**

Here, Bendix is citing the views of Ferguson (1767; 1992 [43]).

5. Evangelical Christianity and Hostility to Science in Trump's America.

As Weber ([10], op.cit.) noted (see above, p.8), the Protestant Reformers were hostile to the innovations of pure science in the 16th Century, but Protestantism 'placed science in the service of technology and the economy'.

Fast forward to the 21st Century, and to the United States of America. The land of 'Silicon Valley' can certainly be described as 'civilised', at least in one sense of that term, although what is meant by 'civilisation' is ambiguous, and is clearly distinct, at least in German, from 'culture' (see Elias, 1994; 2000 [44]) – but the process of civilisation, however that word is defined, can be, and has been, reversed. Popper (1960 [45]) insists – dogmatically – and in opposition to both Hegel and Marx, that there are no 'iron laws of history', but there is at least one, namely that all civilisations decline and fall. Mayr (1995 [46]) noted that there have been no fewer than twenty civilisations over the course of the past 10,000 years, i.e., since the so-called 'Neolithic Revolution', the beginning of the Holocene Epoch, the development of agriculture and the

establishment of the first settlements, which makes an average of 1 for every 500 years.

The present author has written extensively on the subject of both the collapse of capitalism and the decline of civilisation later this century, so there is no need for him to rehearse the same arguments here – but see, for example, Blaber (2024a [47]; 2024b [48]). Lawrence *et al* (2024 [49]) argue that 'the world is currently experiencing a global polycrisis and that this situation is worsening' (p.5), and they define the term 'polycrisis' as:

> **'*the causal entanglement of crises in multiple global systems in ways that significantly degrade humanity's prospects*. The causal interactions between constituent crises are significant enough to produce emergent harms that are different from, and usually greater than, the sum of the harms they would produce separately' (p.4, emphasis original).**

Humanity's capacity to respond effectively to this polycrisis depends crucially on science – but, in the United States especially, science is now under attack, financially and ideologically.

Donald Trump's re-election to the Presidency has been marked, to an even greater degree than his first term in the White House, by hostility to science, a hostility shared by other members of his Republican Party. This has not only manifested itself in the obvious form of decrying climate science (see Horwitz in Allen *et al*, eds. 2024 [50]) and pursuing policies inimical to the climate, but taken other forms, such as opposition to vaccination (Kaiser and Wadman 2024 [51]; they cite a vaccinologist at the University of Pennsylvania, Paul Offit, describing Kennedy's appointment as 'like having someone who believes the Earth is flat as head of NASA',

p.835). Republican hostility extends to the environment generally (Smith, Bognar and Mayer 2024 [52]), exhibited, in practical terms, by such policies as Trump's recent Presidential Orders on commercial fishing in the Pacific (Shiffman 2025 [53]) and deep sea mining (Associated Press 2025 [54]).

The Trump Administration has announced cuts of $4 billion (£3.2 billion) to biomedical research (Halpert 2025 [55]). His attacks on American universities, supposedly motivated by a desire to root out alleged 'antisemitism' or 'left-wing ideologies' in them, are having a dire effect on scientific research at them (Garisto, Tollefson and Witze 2025 [56]).

Garisto (2025 [57]) reported that all new research grants at the US National Science Foundation (NSF) had been frozen, in response to an order from Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

Mervis (2025 [58]) informs us that the NSF, following President Trump's Executive Order Number 14173 of the 21st January 2025, opposing Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) policies, is no longer supporting grants designed to improve the demographics of the scientific workforce, making it more representative of women and minorities, and nor is it making any grants related to the elimination of mis- or disinformation. Some 200 out of 30,000 projects may have been cancelled as a result, Mervis tells us. This is 0.66%, which may not seem much – but will be to those affected.

The vast majority of the impetus for this anti-science attitude, and the policies that ensue from it, stem from the Christian nationalist Right in the United States. Oreskes and Conway (2022 [59]) claim that available data support the conclusion of a crisis of confidence of *conservative*, rather than general public, trust in science, with reaction to scientific findings being highly polarised, politically. They add (p.100):

> **'Researchers have found that scientific literacy and educational attainment do not predict attitudes related to specific science controversies. In general, higher education correlates with positive perceptions of science, yet highly educated Republicans are more likely than less educated ones to reject climate science or think that scientists are exaggerating the threat.'**

This hostility, they argue, is grounded on conservative hostility to 'Big Government', and (ibid.):

> **'in particular the idea that government regulation of the marketplace – whether in response to environmental issues, public health crises, or other social problems – was a step on a slippery slope toward socialism.'**

'Socialism', of course, being a huge bugbear in the United States (that said, a leading candidate in the current election for the office of Mayor of New York City is a self-proclaimed socialist, see Helmore 2025 [60]; so, too, is Bernie Sanders, the Senator for Vermont, see Chotiner 2020 [61]).

This picture is, however, far from complete, because there is much more to American conservative hostility to science than mere opposition to government regulation and preference for *laissez-faire* capitalism – a preference which does not extend as far as free trade with foreign countries, as Donald Trump's tariff policies have made only too clear (Foreman 2025 [62]). Evans (2013 [63]) argues there is evidence of increasing opposition from biblical literalist conservative Protestants to the involvement of scientists in social debates over moral issues, and this – clearly – reflects their attitude to what they would term the 'liberal' agenda on moral issues generally: abortion, divorce, homosexuality, equal rights, and

so on (Margolis 2019 [64]; Robertson 2024 [65]; Getz Eidelhoch 2025 [66]). Perry and Grubbs (2025 [67]) argue that '[American] Christian nationalism' is 'the religion of White identity politics', a religion which is conservative theologically and politically, and one which is a biblically literalist Protestantism. As they say,

> **'Social scientists have long documented the influence of White Americans' "racial resentment," or the extent to which they hold negative feelings about Black Americans and their political attitudes and voting behaviors... more recent work has also argued that White Americans' political views and actions are not only shaped by out-group animus but also in-group loyalty... White Americans (but not non-Whites) who viewed their own racial group as "prototypical" Americans were more likely to support anti-minority policies, suggesting a (unique) link between White racial solidarity and policy preferences that benefit White Americans.'**

Huft, Grindal and Haltinner (2025 [68]), in their analysis of support for the far-right amongst young white Americans, note that:

> **'Moving beyond the neoliberal, economics-focused policies of modern conservatives, the far right has gained traction through its explicit and unapologetic platform of racism, xenophobia, and white nationalism' (p.2).**

This platform is supported, not countered, as one might have hoped, by American Evangelical Christianity, in a shocking

contrast to the teachings of the founder of the Christian faith (see Davis and Perry 2020 [69]).
The Orwellian movement to ban books in school libraries in the United States on the grounds that they are allegedly 'harmful' to children and young people, and might cause them to become homosexual, or prematurely heterosexual, or transgender, or left-wing, or whatever, is documented by Goncalves *et al* (2024 [70]), who note that:

> **'United States schools and libraries have banned books with some regularity for the past two centuries, as traditional norms were challenged by modernist and scientific thought... However, the 2021-2022 school year saw a drastic increase in book bans across the country, often through mandates from school boards and parent complaints... Following the 2020 murder of George Floyd and the intensification of a partisan "culture war" ... book bans have become central to a broader conversation around politics, civics, and identity.'**

The bans, they say, have been directed against books containing profanity, violence, sexual content and any LGBTIQ or black characters. PEN America has documented no fewer than 10,000 such book bans in the 2023-2024 school year alone (Dunbar 2025 [71]).

6. Conclusion.

Protestantism helped to birth industrial capitalism, and the applied science and technology without which it could not have existed. Furthermore, it gave rise to Enlightenment secularism, and the liberal political ideas which are associated with it, responsible for the very 'diversity, equality and inclusion' so despised by Donald Trump, the Republican Party and their

supporters. The attitude of Trump and American evangelicals to climate science has been documented by the present author in Blaber (2022 [72]).
Capitalism depends on healthy science and technology – but the environment for both is threatened by the prevailing political and religious climate in the United States of America. In any event, there is a strict limit to how far capitalism, which depends on population growth and increased consumption of both goods and resources, can flourish, given rising greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, global human population 'overshoot', and resource depletion (Rees, 2023 [73]).
The current political landscape, and the prospects for the future, are grim indeed, with very little light on the horizon.

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