

Why the medical termination of Charlie Gard and Alfie Evans against their parent's wishes are the inevitable outcomes of European culture – a British citizen's view

The case of baby Alfie Evans was in the news yesterday (Friday 20th April 2018) with the judgment from the British Supreme court to support the hospital's refusal to release Alfie to his parent's so that they could transfer him to an alternative medical facility overseas. The basis of the parent's legal defence for Alfie was that he was being held unlawfully captive by the hospital that no longer believes they can treat him but will not allow the parents to transfer him to facilities that want to continue treating him. The case seems to be Charlie Gard II that provoked worldwide interest. I was deeply upset about the Charlie Gard case and considered writing something then of what I felt it was saying about our culture. However, with Charlie dying that time passed but then Alfie arrived and I found myself motivated and passionate enough to give up my weekend to write the first draft. I address this article to both Brits as my country folk, to those in the US because a US doctor was happy to receive Charlie and to the EU because some of my fellow Europeans are happy to receive Alfie with Italy even bestowing citizenship on him. However, I also offer it beyond simply because there was so much international interest and activity around this case (the good, the bad and the ugly).

My first point I make is that I believe the Charlie Gard case was a watershed moment in all sorts of ways, both ethically, morally and legally. It marked an ethical collapse. As evidence for this assertion I will refer you to the work of Professor Savulescu and Professor Singer who during the Charlie Gard case very simply and clearly illuminated the issues from what they believe was a purely secular perspective. In brief, Savulescu demonstrates that in Charlie's case there was absolutely no justification for the treatment of the parents or of Charlie on medical or ethical grounds. His post-mortem and recommendations for the future were published in the principle medical journal *The Lancet* here [1A, 1B] and he has informed me he is currently writing a book on this case. Now I am not claiming that my views are the same as his or that he endorses what I write here other than I asked him to review what I wrote about my understanding of what he said. This was because I do not have any expertise in the medical ethics field and the purpose of my article is not directly to dissect the medical ethics. All I do want to say that his work and Professor Singer's emphatically make the case that something is seriously and fundamentally wrong about the treatment of the parents and the sick babies Charlie and Alfie in these cases. He agreed that I was exactly right on that point for which I breathed a huge sigh of relief.

I make my comment about what I believe this says about European culture on the basis that my expertise lies rather within philosophy (I have a BD, MA and am a PhD philosophy student) with a background in the sciences (I have a BSc and an MSc) who currently still works 8-5 as an engineer. I am an empirical person. I want to show that I believe the failure of medical ethics that he enumerates so lucidly represents a far deeper and dangerous failure in European culture. It will become evident to some reading I am a Christian but I address this article to all and appeal on the basis of a common humanism, not on a religious or political basis. So, as a preliminary remark I want to make it clear that I am not a member of the "alt-right" (which seems a pejorative term for anyone not signed up without reservation to the progressive (US) / Marxist (EU) / Corbynite Labour (UK) socialist agenda. On the contrary, I claim a right to make this declaration having done time in Militant, SWP (Socialist Workers Party), WRP (Workers Revolutionary Party), WP (Workers Power) and the RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party). My natural political home was the far, far-left until

the collapse of morality in the left in the UK during the 1990s. I was happy to find identity as an anarchist and Marxist fellow traveller, happy to tear up that sentimental world that had stripped me at 7, stood me naked in the middle of a cold room for coughing in my sleep because I had contracted pneumonia as a baby and that only because I was shut outside for crying. As the apostle Paul once said, "I bear the scars in my body from the beatings" and I am now 50, deeply concerned at the state of my nation. So, do me the courtesy of listening before you shout "fascist" or "hater". Then and only then abuse if you have to (I understand the instinct) but perhaps maybe think as some of you across the pond and the Continent supported these parents in a way for which some of us here are truly thankful.

It has been particularly noticeable for myself as a UK resident that there has not been anything of the same qualitative depth of coverage of the Alfie case compared with that of Charlie. The coverage is more sensational, protestors storming the hospital entrance, other parents of sick children getting upset because of the disruption etc. There is no in-depth interviewing 'on air' of medical ethics experts or the head of Alder Hey hospital defending their decisions for Alfie. I want to propose there is a good reason for this. Alfie is really "old news" and the Supreme Court essentially repeated itself in this case with the precedent set by the Charlie case. The European Court of Human Rights (for US readers = the real supreme court in the EU) essentially sided with the British not-so-Supreme court and so I am by implication making a statement about the wider European culture. So, let us rewind and start with the mainstream reporting of the case of Charlie. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is known and trusted around the world for its "fair" reporting and you can read their summary of their summing up of case and its significance here [2]. Now, this article has the appearance of journalistic "balance" and the reporter does a reasonable job – he tells us all about the parents fighting for the life of their child and contrasts this with the rigours of the scientific assessments of the hospital, "*Rational, scientific logic was never going to win hearts and minds against the raw emotion of parents trying to do everything they could for the severely ill baby.*" It quotes Prof Uta Frith, a "cognitive development expert" at UCL (University College London), to the same effect – here was the hospital and its scientific objectivity pilloried by the emotions of a world full of social media (see the final paragraphs of the report) forcing the hospital in light of this scrutiny to release more and more information about the case and go to court to defend its *good* name. This legend of GOSH (Great Ormond Street Hospital) is a semaphore for the entire medical profession which is clearly painted as somehow a victim of unfair treatment at the hands of bigots on the internet as they struggled desperately with their dilemmas.

Now, if you are anything like me, you probably missed on first reading the implicit assumption made by the reporter so let us look again: "Rational, scientific logic was never going to win hearts and minds against the raw emotion of parents trying to do everything they could for the severely ill baby" (my emphasis). Do you get the operational assumption? The parents were too emotional to make any truly scientific or rational decision for their child. It needs to be delegated to others more objective and detached with the true best interests of the child nestling beautifully within their dispassionate hearts. This is even more explicit in a *Guardian* editorial [3] where somehow the traumatised, emotional parents incapable of making rational decisions are conflated with the evangelical right, Trump, the Pope and pro-lifers accusing a Nazi NHS (our state national health service) of imprisoning a child. Now *Guardian*, I, for one, would never accept the Pope as God's representative on Earth or *Pontus maximus* (the bridge between God and (Hu)Man(kind)) and Trump's presidency is certainly not Jesus' second coming contra the evangelicals but this side of the pond we both know what to expect from those legends in their own starred and striped minds. But *Guardian*, I am not sure how that is relevant. However, if you can use the Argentinian's name in vain, chuck another righteous moral hand-grenade at Trump and mock the evangelical pro-lifers for

their rank stupidity for defending unborn persons - sorry inanimate fetuses with no independent life or ability to feel pain - to score cheap rhetorical points, so can I - unless the editorial, in itself, is actually a most remarkable piece of *ad hominem* journalism to be found in one of the most respected and oldest of UK newspapers and we can agree it would actually be demeaning to my readers' intelligence to stoop so low.

However, hidden within this little gem of journalism there is the sentence "there are thoughtful medical ethicists on both sides of the argument" and we get a sniff that it might not be a pro-life, alt-right evangelical conspiracy of irrationalism as just described after all. It gets even better because the BBC quotes an interview with the aforementioned Prof Julian Savulescu, describing him as "an expert in ethics at Oxford University". I also heard a brief interview with him during the main serious news program ('Today' on Radio 4) where he makes some of the points that the article enumerates. In brief, the points as enumerated in the BBC article are thus:

1. He believes Charlie's parents should have been allowed to take him to the US earlier in the year - even with the low odds that the treatment would have worked - given that they had raised £1.3m (about \$1.8m US) themselves.
2. He says GOSH - and the doctors the hospital consulted - made a "value judgement" that was reasonable to disagree with (my emphasis).
3. "The state should not have to pay for expensive experimental treatment with low prospect of success, but Charlie's parents have raised the funds...Charlie should have been allowed to go straight away - and saved hundreds of thousands of pounds of British taxpayer funds which have been used to provide months of intensive care."

Now those were well said but the heart of what I want to say tests this.

4. "This is not a religious or right-to-life argument or an argument based on compassion. It's a secular ethical argument about the extreme complexity of judging someone's life to be not worth living."

You can read a version of this argument made jointly by Professor Savulescu and Professor Peter Singer (arguably one of the world's most famous moral philosophers who specialises in bioethics) here [15]. Now, quite clearly, the *Guardian* editor never phoned either Prof for a chat. To skip Professor Singer is perhaps understandable as he is an Aussie, call charges might have been a bit high and it could have been distinctly embarrassing for a fellow liberal to rubbish their reporting. However, Prof Savulescu was just a trunk call to Oxford. Perhaps he was not important enough? I initially read about him here [4] when checking out his credentials. Here is a *scientist* eminently qualified to give an informed commentary about the rationality of the parent's case. It should be clear from those interested that whatever he and Professor Singer has to say on this matter really is "expert", far more so than the other "experts" cited within the BBC article. These are not just experts in abstract philosophical ethics but here are experts on *medical* ethics, bioethics and cognitive development. Savulescu is a director of an institute at Oxford and editor of the *Journal of Medical Ethics*. Whether or not you agree with them, they are clearly academics and scientists of the highest calibre working on the coalface rather than just pontificating at conferences whose views should have been given far more prominence than they were by anyone interested in a fair-minded and rigorous examination of the issues in this case. Would it not have been really responsible of our media to have brought Savulescu and the "medical experts" making decisions for Charlie together so that they could have been appropriately examined by someone that could ask them the right questions? Would we not as the watching public then been able to make a more informed decision and avoided the ridiculous internet circus and vile abuse of hospitals, doctors and death threats to

all involved, including the parents? I thought that was the role of the media in a democracy – to present the issues fully and impartially as possible so that we can make decisions.

So, on the working assumption our media failed us, and I believe continues to do so, let us consider the implications of what he had said:

1. The parents of Charlie had raised £1.3m (around \$1.82m) to allow him to travel to other *medical* facilities around the world. Now these medical facilities were also “expert” and some had demonstrated some success with the rare and serious disorders similar to Charlie. The Prof makes the case that there was really no justification from a *medical* standpoint to refuse his parents leave to have transferred him early on in their fight where there would have been far more probability of a successful intervention.
2. The parents were not irrational in challenging the doctors, hospitals, government and courts; emotional they most certainly were but not “too” emotional that somehow they were outside the realm of proper function.
3. From March to July (you can see the timeline on the BBC article) the hospital was happy to spend hundreds of thousands of tax-payer funds “treating” Charlie. However, I (not the Prof) would like to posit because they had already come to a consensus that nothing could be done, they were actually not treating him at all, they were simply maintaining minimal life support and preventing him from being moved by any and all means necessary until they could *legally* withdraw that life support. Today we have the news this is *exactly* what has happened to Alfie [6].
4. The hospital refused to release Charlie to his parents and was supported in this by medical professionals, the British Courts and the European Courts.

So, let us step back and just cognise what *actually* happened here and why it happened. The BBC article sort of half gets there as it insipidly talks about doctors vs the rights of parents. Now it starts to warm up as it states that following the Cleveland child abuse scandals of the 1980s a 1989 Children’s Act asserted that “the state can and should intervene” and “subsequent” legislation has been created “whereby the state has been emboldened to challenge the view of parents where they believe children’s best interests are no being served” (my emphases). For those in the US, think Warren Court, Roe vs Wade but imagine them making a moral case instead for taking your children away instead of ensuring you can sit anywhere you want on the bus or make reproductive choices. Smell the coffee yet? Note very carefully that phrase “*where they believe children’s best interests are being served*”. This was the *de facto* moral justification for the “state” disregarding the parents of Charlie and now Alfie. This was stated explicitly by, I believe, the director of GOSH (Great Ormond Street Hospital) that asserted that “we live a long way from the world where children have no separate existence [his words] and that the wishes of the parent’s are primary” [my semi-paraphrase]. Cue the BBC article again for another expert, ‘Daniel Sokol, a medical ethicist and barrister, says the case has shone a light on this issue. “It reminds us that the rights of parents over their children are not absolute. *They are limited by what is in the best interests of the child*” (my emphasis).

Now, of course, few reasonable people would assert the rights of parents over their children are “absolute” or that children have no independent existence and that the wishes of parents should *always* be honoured. Some parents are violent abusers and the children need protection by removal. We might also have ethical problems with religious practices that deny life-saving treatment. However, there is an astonishing muddling of categories in the logic of the article at this point. There has been a conflation of disagreeing with the representatives of the State (medical professionals and the courts) and refusing to release children to parents for transfer to alternative

medical facilities, with child abuse. We are not talking about child abuse in any way, sense or form - Prof Savulescu already made the ethical and medical case that the parent's in this case were perfectly reasonable and rational. Consider again, GOSH had no treatment to offer, the parents have found an expert who is happy to treat him, so thank you GOSH for your help, please now get out of the way, our taxes really do pay your salaries, you work for us (healthcare is state funded in the UK). This mirrors exactly the situation that Alfie's parent's finds himself in and the parents have arguably a stronger *medical* case than Charlie as a clinic has reviewed his notes and are prepared to treat him. Yet, again, the British Supreme Court and the hospital are using this phrase "the best interests of the child" and in their judgment the best interests of the child are actually for the child to have life support withdrawn by a hospital that has no treatment to offer and for the State to insist on "terminating with dignity" a child's life. Just *what* is the problem that required the hospital, the British government and EU courts to prevent the honouring of the parental desire?

We might conclude we are dealing with an extreme case of medical arrogance by the British medical profession and this seems to be the angle picked up in some of the international comment [23]. Is it possible that somehow the enormous supposed expertise and reputation of these children's hospitals would be threatened (thus attractiveness to celebrity donors) if Alfie was transferred and responded positively to treatment elsewhere. In an interesting conversation I had with an ethics philosopher he felt that it may well be that the possibility of being sued if Alfie was transferred and improved but then died which may be in the thinking of the hospital. He had issues with believing the hospital had "no reasons" to not release him. There is probably some plausibility in this proposition if you are across the pond where it is not unknown for the injured to be left bleeding on the sidewalk because they have no insurance but it is hard to countenance in the UK that the hospital would go to such extreme lengths on this basis alone with our state-funding of healthcare. If it is a factor, it is a less important one – I am sure a legal release agreement could be drafted that indemnified the hospital. Additionally, for it to happen twice at two different hospitals and medical teams also stretches the limits of credibility of this explanation. Something else is going on and I believe the real issue lies with understanding the repeated application of this precedential legal and axiomatic moral phrase "the best interests of the child". At the heart of this issue is just who has the right to decide what "the best interests of the child are" – it is certainly not the child, someone else is deciding and it certainly is no longer the parents. The Profs argued the case on a scientific basis and with as much objectivity as could be possible and seem to have been ignored. Let me now suggest that there is a far deeper ideological battle being forced to the surface. Let us review the evidence for this:

1. The BBC article chooses not to describe Prof Savulescu as a scientist or even a "medical ethics" expert preferring to mute his credentials simply with the term "ethics expert" and by simply stating his refined case with no further comment. This is like dismissing the Hiroshima attack as a little skirmish in the Sea of Japan.
2. There is already the confirmation bias in the BBC article that favours the "objective scientists" battling against the "raw emotions" of the parents whose "raw emotions" are clearly making them incapable of making rational decisions [12].
3. The bias is blatant in a *Guardian* editorial. Those in the UK know the "liberal" credentials of the *Guardian*, guarding all that is good in the UK. Those in the US probably know the *Guardian* for the newspaper that the reporter worked for to whom Jason Bourne told to divulge your black-ops secrets to in the name of freedom and justice. They explicitly juxtaposition the "scientific" reasonableness of the state's representatives, "GOSH believes there is no treatment available that has any chance of success" with the "emotionality" of the parents against the backdrop of evangelical religious "prejudice". For aesthetic completeness, we had the sad photograph of the

“understandably desperate” parents who being “desperate” have obviously (but understandably) behaved in an irrational and emotional way.

4. In Alfie’s case references were made by the BBC reporter to the Christian legal firm representing them. Why mention it is a Christian legal firm other than to amplify that the religious fanatic angle is more accessible in Alfie’s case because the parents have asked for prayer support and help from the Vatican, poor little ignoramuses. Even better, it is Christian CitizenGo that has a petition for Alfie with just 168000 measly signatures of other social subversives since Dec 2016, not those liberal 38-Degreeers with their 200000 signatures to ban plastic straws in a few weeks or 1781 signatures in one hour on change.org to create a *Windrush Day* celebrating immigration. It is sure shaping up to be an evangelical conspiracy.
5. The *Guardian* article by conflating in the way it does, is admitting we have an ideological battle at the root of Charlie’s treatment and they are on the opposing side. Note their admissions, the phrases “it is not just a medical issue or science vs emotions issue” and “the battle is more nuanced” – yes, it certainly is Mr Editor.
6. The Prof’s scientific reasonableness at item 4 is looking curiously isolated, “This is not a religious or right-to-life argument or an argument based on compassion. It's a secular ethical argument about the extreme complexity of judging someone's life to be not worth living.” Did no one read his paper in the *Lancet* and we must endure this action replay with Alfie? Perhaps because he, consciously or unconsciously assigns a primary importance and *value* to life.

Let me now suggest the ideology behind this mess is that of the misnomer “liberal”. Let us be honest, the “liberal” tag is now a profound anachronism, they are my old friends the Marxists, for the US – Bernie’s buddies. This is my empirical definition, I am not being malicious here. This genus is very tolerant until you disagree with them. We could not agree about anything amongst ourselves, why do you think I could cruise all the different leftist groups I did? From the point of view of this ideology, my younger self would ignore the Prof too because there is a whiff of fuzzy post-Christian thinking in his appeal that a “value judgment” was made and he considers life has intrinsic value rather than base utility. He fails the materialist test and is guilty of bourgeois sentimentality. One rightly suspects him of something unscientific because so many academics, paediatricians and professors ran to the defence of the hospitals. The *Guardian* would lump him with the “prejudiced”. Perhaps they would consider him “understandably desperate that Charlie [might still have] some quality of life”. The BBC reporter as part of a state socialist agency cannot engage with the significance of his arguments, he states them and skips over them, he has no understanding or comprehension of their significance. It was probably a wise choice, you do not bite the hand of the state that feeds you [16]. The argument about life he seems to believe is worth having yet GOSH, Alderhey (hospital), the Supreme Court and ECHR (European Court of Human Rights) all seem to disagree. They seem to believe in themselves as the infallible organ of the scientific socialist state (as Khrushchev said to the Stalinists [9]). Thus, they are able in the name of the scientific reasonableness to use the full weight of law to disprove that they could have possibly even remotely been guilty of any kind of unreasonableness, they will even get a court order to ensure they can kill Charlie and then Alfie (mercifully and with full state honours) before we allow you to move him at the parent’s expense. In case you think I have jumped off the deep end here, the former editor of the *Journal of Medical ethics* describes succinctly how the state through the courts abused their power in these two cases:

“I argue that if the law accepts that these are genuine moral dilemmas then it can not possibly have ‘objective’ resolutions of these dilemmas – objective in the sense of morally correct resolutions – simply because there are no and can be no

objectively correct resolutions of genuine moral dilemmas. So whenever possible the law should avoid imposing such resolutions. In both these cases the law could have avoided doing so."

He cross-references his argument with a previous judgment in a similar case where the judge delineated the correct boundaries of the British constitution:

*"the courts are not, contrary to what is sometimes believed, arbiters as to the merits of cases of this kind. Were we to express opinions as to the likelihood of the effectiveness of medical treatment, or as to the merits of medical judgment, then we should be straying far from the sphere which under our constitution is accorded to us. **We have one function only, which is to rule upon the lawfulness of decisions. That is a function to which we should strictly confine ourselves.**"*

[27]

All these expert commentators agree that the courts and the judges extended their jurisdiction way beyond where it had previously been positioned. Only Marxism (in its red or black forms) assigns this paternal role to the state.

So, for me this treatment (more correctly, ignoring) of the Profs, Charlie and Alfie is only explicable if we accept that we have just witnessed a clash of ideology and the birth-pains of the revised socialist world order after the first one got a bit unstuck in the 20th century by taking the prize from the Roman Catholic church for the most people you can kill in a single century. In this sense, we see that the issue really *is* a religious one using the definition that religion is the most basic, self-justifying foundational beliefs of a culture. This religion can be theistic or secular but religious it certainly is, you have never met a fundamentalist until you witnessed an argument between different Trotskyite factions or were like me, the only anarchist in the RCP's conference. What I believe we have emerging is what has incubated in the womb of Europe since the French revolution. A leader of that revolution asserted that children were not for the glory of the private family but for the glory of the new republic. Marx put the meat on the bones by asserting that the socialist scientific state was the infallible organ of progress – in modern speak we can transliterate his penchant for metaphysical metaphors as meaning "the State is infallible in its decisions because it is based on objective scientific principles, not subjective religious or emotional ones" – now reread the BBC article and the *Guardian* editorial and you understand their confirmation bias for the "scientists" against the emotionality of the parents.

Lenin added "we no longer have any private, with us all is public" [8]. It stands to such a reason that such a state rightly exercises complete dominion over its children, it decides who lives and who dies, who can travel to what country for medical treatment and the parents are simply a means to ensure just the basic functionality of the child before it joins, at 4 years old, at the behest of the Institutes of the Republic of John Dewey, his or her or he/shes real family, the schools of the democratic socialist state. It is what the state considers and mandates that is the only guiding principle. As the foundation stone of this beautiful Baconian *Atlantis*, "the best interests of the child" is another way of stating "the best interests of the child are the interests the state decides scientifically for that child [parents are too emotionally involved and often suffer from that evolutionary artefact, religious prejudice], if that child has no potential to fulfil those interests it is in the best interest of that that child to die quickly but, fear not, we will help him die in the name of compassion" [I am paraphrasing the Supreme Court summation and news item as reported on 'Today' on the 20th April 2018]. With the failure of the greedy economic status quo we call capitalism, which is now in its greedy 21st century form, far removed from its Smithsonian and

Puritan roots that created the first wealthy nations rather than just wealthy individuals, we are seeing the re-emergence of a rebranded, visceral rather than intellectual Marxism in our culture. Think of it, the EU is USSR-lite, this is an empirical fact, not prejudice - French Marxists designed the new EU-state that is now emerging in all its glory after their failed 'revolution' of 1968 [26] and German fellow-travellers have always financed it.

How else could we explain the principled commitment to the fascism of the refusal to allow the release of a child for treatment despite the principled and disciplined opposition of senior medical ethics practitioners? How could you else consider the hundreds of thousands of tax-payer money well spent unless it served a higher purpose of asserting a new normal that children really *do* belong to the state. This was shared by the socialisms of both Hitler and Stalin with their youth brigades. Hitler once answered a critic (obviously at a time when he was still prepared to answer his critics with words) by saying "I do not care whether you agree with me or not, I already have your children"[18]. It is important to note that it was only after the family squabble between Hitler and Stalin that the Bolshevik Left started calling Hitler fascist, the USSR and Germany started on the same side in the war. Operationally Hitler's and Stalin's regimes were almost identical: single party, big state, nationalist, new economics; think of politics as a circle, not a line – the methods of fascism and Marxist socialism naturally merge into one another, only their details are different. How else can we explain the declaration by the Supreme Court to parents throughout the EU, we do not care how much money or support you have, this is the new order and you had better get used to it? How else could you allow a child to be maintained by life support with no treatment permitted or therapy even attempted, just life-supported until you could legally withdraw it? Is anyone getting the sheer callousness demonstrated in these cases? At least the guillotine of the French revolution was quick and you got a hot meal before you went to the gas chamber at Hitler's invitation. If you are Alfie in modern Britain you get a synthetic opioid designed to suppress your bodily functions, dehydrate your body and speed your death "with dignity". Now if you dissent that this is indeed not dignified in any way, expect to pay big for the privilege of not finding a court that will back your right and rational concern for your child against the "experts" of a state.

Now be careful here, I am not saying that every medical professional involved is a card-carrying communist and that medical teams do not care sincerely for children. As paradoxical as it may seem, there really are abortionists principled and passionate about women's health, feeling it is in the best interests of the unborn children to be terminated for all sorts of social justice reasons. Just as the founder of Planned Parenthood passionately felt that the "problems of negroes" could be managed by compassionately providing abortion to negroes [19] and both she and Margaret Pyke, the founder of the British FPA (Family Planning Association) were sincere and passionate eugenicists [20] who were not averse to using religious language to describe their work, I am asserting that philosophically, consciously or unconsciously, we have seen an absolute commitment to the statist ideology and humanist religion in its atheistic, materialistic Marxist form by these hospitals and the courts. Life is viewed in some way as a function of its potential utility. If, in some way, you value "life" just because it is life, you are suffering from a medieval post-Christian dysphoria and the only antidote is to be purged from your hate-filled thinking at the Rorty Institute of pragmatism (why consider life special if we are post-essentialist Darwinians, why be sentimental, if killing is necessary it provides its own justification on that practical basis alone [11]) and do an advanced internship at John Dewey's institute. Dewey asserted that the new family would be the family of the democratic state [10]. He was the first patron of the ACLU who from their inception, through the Warren court era in the US, have proved that they most certainly believe all the power of the State should be used to promote "social justice" = socialist justice. Though perhaps not Dewey's intention, this approach to justice has come to mean justice determined for everyone else by an enlightened, passionate and

principled minority. Dewey's European heirs inevitably fused it with Europe's historic elitism that extended all the way from Plato [25], believing the consensus Dewey viewed as the highest democratic ideal could only be obtained if the educational system was used to "dum down" most of the electorate for the common good and harmony of society. The astonishing level of illiteracy (15% of UK adults on the most generous measure [5]) with only 20% getting to what in the US would be college level, about 5% to undergrad level) and preponderance of day-time soaps should be a testimony of what a visionary he was held to be by our modern political fathers. I propose for these reasons we have arrived at this modern political culture within the EU:

1. Rather than having to think, take responsibility for our lives and govern ourselves within our communities, people give up their authority over institutions to be managed by their central governments and "experts".
2. These governments decide "democratically" on the basis of the votes of about 40% of the 20-30% (i.e. less than 10%) of the eligible electorate (I think it is between 10-20% in the US) what is morally right and wrong for them.
3. The courts and police of the state as the agents of true righteousness enforce what is right against anyone that dares to object including demotions and sackings at work for private Facebook posts, imprisonment for senior citizens refusing to let rooms to 'gay couples' or refusing to bake penis shaped cakes for people who think they can tell you what to do with your property or in your business, all in the name of anti-discrimination and social justice.
4. We thus conclude being mad and perhaps losing our job is probably not worth it and the government probably knows what it is doing and are probably right after all and I just need a bit of re-education. As long as we get two weeks off a year and can go to Ibiza or can get to church and dream about the Rapture when all those nasty secular humanists that are making me do this really get it, life is not that bad.
5. In fact, we now admit we are incapable of self-government so please do it for us and we will gladly give you, the divine state of Hegel [17], 40% or more of our wages every month so you can make even more rules to turn me into a truly good person!

My parodying aside, this sad state of affairs results from the fact that most voters can no longer be bothered to vote or even register to vote (I think in the US only 25% of Christians are even registered to vote) and suddenly find out they do not agree with what has been decided and get mad and alienated, label all politicians as crooks and will now definitely not vote as a matter of principle. Unfortunately, by default, you voted for who did get in. The point I am making here is that in a dysfunctional democracy, you only need that 10% to be disciplined and unified and you shape the political agenda. As an exemplar case, without prejudice, in fact hats off to them for their zeal and commitment, this is how the LGBT community have managed to push their agenda (or more accurately "cause" in the words of Jimmy Sommerville, the gay frontman of Bronski Beat), so hard and so successfully though they are only ever 10% or less of the population.

Alas for us Europeans, participation in European parliament (EU) elections is as low as 13% in some countries and even aggregated EU wide is down from 62% in 1979 to 43% in 2014 [21]. In what sense do we have democracy? Our culture is seen to be morally bankrupt and we are ripe for Marxist tyranny as they "correct" our autophagic relic of post-capitalist economics [7]. In the UK this is now mainstream as we can now join a respectable Marxist group much as you in the US have a champion in Bernie. It is called the non-parliamentary Labour party under Corbyn (most of the Parliamentary Labour party barely tolerate him) and agree with shadow chancellor [US = Vice President] McDonnell that "parliamentary democracy has failed us, we need to organise [for revolution]" [22]. Remember when a senior British general threatened a military intervention if

Corbyn made it to No.10? Think it cannot happen in the UK, where the mother of parliaments graces the world with its holy womb, think again, it already nearly has (twice) [13]. This is because Marxism is attractive and easy if you want revenge and “justice” but we need to educate our young of its bloody and ruthless praxis wherever it has gained the hearts of people as they cry “justice” in their pain and frustration. Marxism appeals to the marginalised and the disaffected because it speaks the same language of justice and equality which post-Reformation Christian civilisation defined but offers the bonus of getting even, with the result its history and wake is that of fascist intellectual tyranny and bloody terror. Like *Boxer*, of Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, the symbol of the once indomitable spirit of the Russian peasant, the guardians of the revolution ensure you end up powerless and disenfranchised, carted off to your death in the pig’s wagon, “they promised me liberty and gave me only bondage”.

You in the US at least have a shot at a better future because of your written constitution that reminds your judges of what they should stand for in the world (the UK does not have a written constitution and so has a value-free, neutral concept of judges, a discussion for another time) and your libertarian cultural history emphasises the importance of the individual and the family. The BBC article I started with included a peek over the Atlantic, "The wishes of parents and 'surrogates' generally carry more weight, which is why many US commentators have expressed surprise at the hospital's handling of this case". Surprised? If I understand at least something of what Prof Savulescu was saying, it would be that the standards of medical ethics over there would have the State demonstrate an exceptional case of moral depravity to deny the exercise of parental authority to do what *they think* is best for *their* children. Prof Kolm, a family law professor at Regent University makes this case interestingly and simply here [24]. You obviously still believe in some concept of family. A Marxist sooner or later develops a pathological hatred of the traditional family as an instrument of economic and gender oppression, it is the enemy of social progress because of the “false” values parents give their children. I hated what I thought was my dysfunctional family, preferring to sleep under a bush at 17. Yet, at 23 years of age I was shocked out of my bitterness as I held in my own arms a baby born at 22 weeks in a premature babies unit when the legal limit for abortion here is 26 weeks. I was shocked then as I thought about myself shouting at a demonstration “abortion on demand” a few weeks earlier and am embarrassed and disgusted now at the way my government is behaving regarding the sick children of our nation now born, in that it is now even bold enough to terminate children by judicial decree against the wishes of the parents of law-abiding citizens. It seems everyone has a ‘right’ except that baby to live and so I must disagree on this technicality with the Profs too though I accept the strength and ruthless logic of their case on the secular facts alone. Ethics are surely predicated on the basis that life is worth living. No life, no ethical concerns are necessary.

So, to finish off, let me remind you of my argument presented here:

1. Prof Savulescu and Professor Singer, medical ethics experts, practitioners and distinguished academics demonstrate there was no secular medical or ethical reason to disregard the wishes of the parents in the Charlie Gard case;
2. The parents were not suffering from such emotional distress that they had lost the ability to behave in a rational way or to appreciate the choices presented by medical scientists;
3. The State thus acted illegitimately by claiming they were the only rational and objective party;
4. The State thus had no right to withdraw parental rights over their children and to assert the right to terminate the children using the moral justification they were “acting in the best interests of the child”, a precedent drawn from law designed to deal with child abuse;

5. The universalisation of this precedent as an ethical principle indicates that a deeper ideological commitment is at the root of these actions;
6. The ideology is functionally identified as that of a rebranded Marxism boldly and coarsely asserting its superiority over values derived from Christian civilisation;
7. With the case of Alfie following hot on the heels of Charlie, Prof Savulescu and Prof Singer were clearly comprehensively ignored despite their commanding erudition because they believed it was an issue of secular ethics;
8. I accept their reasoning is sound but I posit it is indicative of a much greater cultural collapse into the true fascism characteristic of Marxist praxis of the infallible scientific state justified in terminating life by its atheist materialism that strips life of any intrinsic meaning.
9. In the wake of this kind of judicial action, we need to wake up and smell the slop that is being put on our dinner plates garnished with that fresh salad of social justice before we lose another generation and another 200 million as collateral damage to the new, visceral Marxism that we are sleepwalking into.

I will leave the last word to Professor Savulescu as an excerpt from an email he sent in reply to my request that I had not misinterpreted his work:

At the end of the Today programme you cite, they asked me: "So you think all these doctors and all these Courts are wrong?" I replied "Yes" and everything I have seen and learnt confirms that judgement.

I believe that final phrase was cut from the report. I also find myself unable to disagree with his conclusion.

Postscript

Alfie finally passed away at 02:30 BST, Saturday 28th April 2018, one week after his ventilator was removed.

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I wish to express thanks to my PhD supervisor Dr Toby Betenson for reading and making constructive, substantive criticism of the first draft of this article, despite the fact it is only indirectly related to my research.

Special thanks to Professor Savulescu for taking the time to read and comment on earlier drafts of this article, for drawing attention to the depth of unease within important thinkers within the medical ethics community and the encouragement that my basic instinct that something was very wrong in these cases is based on a shared humanism.

Online version: <https://medium.com/@mmacneill123/why-the-medical-termination-of-charlie-gard-and-alfie-evans-against-their-parents-wishes-are-the-c687ec7e2598>

References and Endnotes

[1A, 1B] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673617321256?via%3Dihub>. This is the link to the professors paper 'After Charlie Gard: ethically ensuring access to innovative treatment (2017)' published in *The Lancet*. It is behind a paywall.

The professor also provided me with this link which was his initial response to the judgment before it became world news. It is not behind a paywall:

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)31204-7/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)31204-7/abstract)

This is an excerpt from an email he sent me:

"I thought I was alone but then I encouraged Peter Singer, the world's most famous philosopher, to join me. He saw the logic as I did. I later found out Raanan Gillon, who was previously Editor of the Journal of Medical Ethics and one of the founders of medical ethics in the UK, was giving similar arguments to me. I respect Peter and Raanan a lot as real experts. Raanan like me felt his comments were censored by the media who wanted to portray good, rational doctors vs stupid, lower class, emotional parents."

[2] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-40644896>

[3] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jul/09/the-guardian-view-on-charlie-gard-reason-and-unreason>

[4] <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/find-an-expert/professor-julian-savulescu>

[5] <https://literacytrust.org.uk/parents-and-families/adult-literacy/>

[6] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-43876559>

[7] McVicar, M.J., *Christian Reconstruction – R J Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), p230.

[8] Lenin, V.I., "ON THE TASKS OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR JUSTICE UNDER THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY", <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1922/feb/20c.htm>

[9] <https://www.britannica.com/place/Soviet-Union/The-U-S-S-R-from-1953-to-1991#ref306218>

[10] <http://www.iep.utm.edu/dewey/#H4>

[11] Rorty, R., 'A World without substances or essences' in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London: Penguin), p.64

[12] The BBC pushed this angle to the extreme in radio interviews on BBCs Radio 4 *Today* on 26th April 2018. In my view, the structure of the reporting in the program should be used as an exemplar of how to structure a biased report in a manner to allow you to claim it was not biased which may be worth picking up on in a follow-up article.

[13] <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/british-army-could-stage-mutiny-under-corbyn-says-senior-serving-general-10509742.html>

[14] <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/30/world/68-plot-in-britain-verified-by-wilson.html>

When Lord Mount Batten was blew to pieces in 1979 by the IRA part of their rationale was because he had been approached by intelligence officers and British Generals in the late 1960s and again in the 1970s to lead a coup against Harold Wilson who they felt was about to "come out" as an out and out Communist. The military in the UK hold an enormous amount of latent power and the population are not permitted to bear arms to defend themselves against the government.

[15] <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2017/08/02/unpicking-what-we-mean-by-best-interests-in-light-of-charlie-gard/>

[16] Every British person that wants to watch the BBC or anybody else needs to pay for a TV license, I think it is around £150 now. The 'license fee' then goes to funding the BBC, an enormous state corporation now known for its 'liberal' views.

[17] <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/pr/prstate.htm> Hegel's view of the state was metaphysical. The concept of the state within Marxism is one its most religious characteristics.

[18] Shirer, W., *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p.249

[19] <https://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/08/14/432080520/fact-check-was-planned-parenthood-started-to-control-the-black-population>

[20] Pyke, M., 'Family Planning: An Assessment' in *The Eugenics Review* (Vol.55, No.2, July 1963), pp.13ff. The document is available here: http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/4569/1/Pyke-M_Family-planning-an-assessment_BSL_1963.pdf

[21] <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/turnout.html>

[22] See https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/john-mcdonnell-new-organisational-form-labour-no-fetish-marxism-2011-kicking-off-labour-mps_uk_58b73ccee4b019d36d106133 and https://www.reddit.com/r/LabourUK/comments/6e41vf/video_of_john_mcdonnell_saying_parliamentary/

[23] http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2018/april/sacrificing-alfie-for-british-national-pride?cpid=EU_CBNNEWS

[24] http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2018/april/heres-the-legal-reason-why-the-uk-can-force-alfie-evans-to-die?cpid=EU_CBNNEWS

[25] Santas, G. (2007). PLATO'S CRITICISMS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE REPUBLIC. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 24(2), 70-89. doi:10.1017/S0265052507070173

[26] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-43876888> . An interesting (but brief) retrospect.

[27] Gillon R., <http://blogs.bmj.com/medical-ethics/2018/05/01/why-the-parents-of-both-charlie-gard-and-more-recently-alfie-evans-should-have-been-allowed-to-decide-about-their-sons-best-interests/>