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John Kampfner

Author, commentator, and broadcaster

London / Berlin

Born in 1962 in Singapore
BA in Modern History and Russian from The Queen's College, Oxford

PROJECT

“Why the World Does It Better”

My latest book, my eighth, entitled “Why the World Does It Better,” highlights specific decisions or interventions taken by governments and citizens in recent years that are blazing a trail for the rest of us to follow. It mixes deep research and data with interviews with experts and practitioners, while reporting in detail from each of the countries featured.

In the book, to be published in summer 2026, I focus on issues that are essential to combating the challenges of the second half of this decade and into the next one: climate, public health, ageing, poverty, technology, demography, migration, resources, and equality between countries and within countries.

My choice of countries is deliberately eclectic. Some are the standard “overachievers” in Northern and Western Europe – those that top the lists put out by the OECD, the UN, and others. I am looking, inter alia, at education in Finland, cyber security in Estonia, public housing in Austria, and immigration in Canada.

I also highlight best-practice examples from Middle Ground states and the Global South, many of which are producing more innovative solutions than wealthier nations. Hence my choice of Costa Rica and Morocco on biodiversity and renewables and of Taiwan, whose health service outperforms others.

The book aims to prompt a debate about the structure of society, the size and role of the state, and the trade-offs required in tackling future crises. Are statist interventions essential to achieve maximum impact, particularly during times of crisis (such as climate change)? Do such interventions work against the spirit of innovation and personal responsibility – or are they the best way of encouraging people, within countries and between countries, to work together? Amid a canon of books pointing to the troubles ahead, I hope to help foster a different form of globalisation, one that is based in the willingness to learn from others, including those with whom we might – at first glance – have little in common.

Recommended Reading

- Kampfner, John. *Freedom for Sale: How We Made Money and Lost Our Liberty*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2009.
- . *Why the Germans Do It Better: Notes from a Grown-Up Country*. London: Atlantic Books, 2020.
- . *In Search of Berlin: The Story of a Reinvented City*. London: Atlantic Books, 2023.