

Is It Already Too Late to Say Goodbye? Jonathan Cook

By [Jonathan Cook](#)

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

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It seems we may have reached the moment when it is time to say goodbye. It has been fun, educational and sometimes cathartic – for me at least. I hope you got something from our time together too.

I am not going anywhere, of course. Not for now at least. I love to write. For as long as I feasibly can, I will continue to rail against injustice, call out corporate power and its abuses, and demand a fairer and more open society.

But I have to be realistic. I have to recognise that a growing number of you will not be joining me here on this page for much longer. And it feels rude after so much time together not to bid you a fond farewell before it is too late. I will miss you.

Many of you may have assumed it wouldn’t end this way. You probably imagined that I would get banned by Facebook or Twitter. You would be able to rally round, send in complaints worded in the strongest possible terms, and lobby for my reinstatement. Maybe even sign a petition.

But it isn’t going to end like that. There will be no bang. I have been too careful for that to be my fate. I have avoided rude and crude words. I have steered clear of insults (apologies if my responses have sometimes been a little caustic). I have not defamed anyone. I have avoided “fake news” – except to critique it. I have not peddled “conspiracy theories”, unless quoting the British Medical Journal on Covid now counts as misinformation (yes, I know for a few of you it does).

But none of that has helped. My blog posts once attracted tens of thousands of shares. Then, as the algorithms tightened, it became thousands. Now, as they throttle me further, shares can often be counted in the hundreds. “Going viral” is a distant memory.

No, I won’t be banned. I will fade incrementally, like a small star in the night sky – one among millions – gradually eclipsed as its neighbouring suns grow ever bigger and brighter. I will disappear from view so slowly you won’t even notice.

Which is why I am saying my goodbyes now while I can still reach you, my most obstinate followers.

But this isn't really about one small light being snuffed out. This isn't just about our relationship coming to an end. Something bigger, and more disturbing, is taking place.

Journalists like me are part of an experiment – in a new, more democratised media landscape. We have developed new reader-funded models so that we can break free of the media corporations, which until now ensured billionaires and the state controlled the flow of information in one direction only: to speak down to us.



[Watch the video here.](#)

The corporate media needs corporate advertising to survive – or the owners' deep pockets. They don't need *you*, except as a captive audience. You're both their prisoner and their product.

But the lifeblood of a reader-funded journalist, as the name suggests, are readers. The more of you we attract, the better chance there is that we can generate donations and income and make the model sustainable. Our Achilles' heel is our dependence on social media to find you, to keep reaching you, to offer you an alternative from the corporate media.

If Facebook (sorry, the Meta universe) and Twitter stop independent writers from growing their readerships by manipulating the algorithms, by ghosting and shadow-banning us, and by all the other trickery we do not yet understand, then new voices cannot grow their funding base and break free of corporate control.

And equally, for those like me who are already established and have significant numbers of readers, these tech giants can whittle them away one by one. Ostensibly, I have many tens of thousands of followers, but for several years now I have been reaching fewer and fewer of you. I am starved of connection. The danger, already only too obvious, is that my readership, and funding model, will slowly start to shrivel and die.

Joe Rogan, Russell Brand and a handful of titans of the new media age are so big they can probably weather it out. But the rest of us will not be so lucky.

Readers will lose sight of us, as our light slowly fades, and then we will be gone completely. Vanished.

I have lost count of the followers who – because, god knows, an algorithm slipped up? – tell me they have received a social media post many months after they last saw one from me. In the cacophony of media noise, they had not noticed that I had unexpectedly gone quiet until that reminder arrived or else they assumed I had given up writing.

Which is why, if you want to keep seeing posts from me and writers like me, if this is not soon to be a final goodbye, if you think it important to read non-corporate analysis and commentary, then you need to act. You should be bookmarking your favourite writers and visiting their sites regularly – not just when you are prompted to by Mark Zuckerberg.

You need to be an active consumer of news – not a passive one, as you were raised to be when the choice was between three TV channels and a dozen print newspapers.

You need to search out and maintain those connections before they are gone entirely and the window has closed. Because those voices you prize now will wither and decay like autumn leaves if they have no audience. Even when you finally remember to go search for them, if you leave it too long you may find they are no longer there to be discovered. You will have missed the chance to say goodbye.

So let us say it now, while we still can: Farewell.

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Writing is a solitary activity, and it can be easy to imagine that what was obvious inside your head will be clear to others when that idea takes its place in the material world. But a proportion of early readers of this post have mistaken it for an actual goodbye, rather than as a cautionary tale of what has been happening and what is still to come. So let me reassure you: I am going to continue writing and you can continue reading me, so long as either Twitter and Facebook direct you to me or you make the effort to find me.

Here's hoping that my goodbye will prove unnecessary.

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This essay first appeared on [Jonathan Cook's blog](#).

Jonathan Cook won the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His books include "Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East" (Pluto Press) and "Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair" (Zed Books). His website is www.jonathan-cook.net.

He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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