



Sir Roger Scruton

POLITICS NEEDS A FIRST-PERSON PLURAL

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An Interview with Ryszard Legutko

A SEA OF TROUBLE IN EUROPE

"The system that we live in has become very constraining."

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OLD-SCHOOL JOURNALISM - REPORTING YOU CAN TRUST



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THE CONSERVATIVE

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WE ARE THE CORE OF A WIDER MOVEMENT TO UNITE ALL ITALIAN CONSERVATIVES

An Interview with Giorgia Meloni, Party Leader of the Brothers of Italy (FdI)



Will the Brothers of Italy (FdI) be running in the European elections in May under your own name or in an alliance with other parties?

My party, the Brothers of Italy, is the core of a wider movement to unite all Italian conservatives and all those that wish to maintain national sovereignty in Europe. Our party is the natural choice for millions of Italians, and it will certainly be on the ballot in the European elections on 26 May. We would, however, welcome other political movements join with us in this effort under our electoral symbol.

What is the fundamental objective of the Brothers of Italy in the European Elections?

Our aim is to return to Brussels with a larger and combative group and to strengthen the array of those parties that wish to preserve the national sovereignty of their member states. We will work with all the conservative groups to bridge the divide between the EPP center-right parties and the populists, thereby relegating the left and Macron to the sidelines of European politics.

Why did your party join the European Conservative and Reformist Group (ECR Group) in the European Parliament?

After Brexit, the ECR Group will be led by the conservative Polish governing party PiS. PiS is the most important governing party in the Visegrad Group, and the natural example to emulate for those who wish to preserve national sovereignty and stand up inside the European Union. Furthermore, it is a natural political predecessor for us, since our political predecessors in the Alleanza Nazionale were affiliated with tPiS prior to 2009. We also hope that the Hungarian governing party Fidesz, Orbán's party, will join this group after the elections. We also believe we could play a role strengthening the voice of the Mediterranean countries in the ECR group; a group which already counts as its members important personalities such as Raffaele Fitto, Remo Semagiotto, Stefano Maullu and Innocenzo Leontini.

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Daniel Dalton MEP BLOCKING TERRORIST CONTENT ONLINE

New EU-wide legislation to tackle terrorist content posted online has been recently unveiled by ECR MEP Daniel Dalton. His draft report adds teeth to the existing code of practice while maintaining an emphasis on voluntary action. The report was considered by the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee and it is hoped it will be voted on by all MEPs before the European elections. p.2

Jan Zahradil MEP RENEWED FRENCH- GERMAN AXIS

"If the EU's two largest states want to work together that's up to them. But it shouldn't be an attempt to control everyone else - individual countries are best placed to decide what's best for them, this means keeping autonomy on foreign policy, taxation and migration." p.2

Anna Fotyga MEP TACKLING STRATEGIC PROPAGANDA

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CONSERVATIVE ICONS WILLIAM F BUCKLEY JR.

by Roger Kimball

"I'd rather be governed by the first 2,000 names in the Boston telephone directory than by the 2,000 people on the faculty of Harvard University." p.22

MUSIC Riccardo Muti FINDING THE MUSIC BETWEEN THE NOTES

by Jay Nordlinger

Years ago, I asked Maestro Lorin Maazel about the future of classical music. The first words out of his mouth were "Thank God for China." p.27

FAITH & FREEDOM



SPECIAL FEATURE

In Europe WALLS WORK

The continuing showdown between President Trump and the Democrats over the promised wall along America's southern border, has left European Conservatives perplexed by the regressive Left's insistence borders don't work. They do! Hungary's Prime Minister, Victor Orban has built a wall and demonstrated how borders protect.

At the height of the European migration crisis in 2015 Hungary Budapest's railway station was transformed in to a campsite for migrants transiting via the "Balkan Route" to wealthier northern European countries. Over the course of the year, migrants numbering in the millions - mainly from the Middle East,

North Africa and Central Asia - set off for Europe. For those coming from North Africa, a Mediterranean crossing became the most likely route. Those coming from the South and East, however, embarked in large numbers on a route that traveled through Turkey and Southeastern Europe to the frontiers of the European Union. CONTINUED ON p.4





Jan Zahradil MEP France and Germany are using their dominance to force their own EU agenda on other Member States



ECR Group Czech MEP Jan Zahradil has raised concerns that France and Germany are using their dominance to force their own EU agenda on other Member States.

He was speaking after Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron met on Tuesday in Aachen, Germany, to sign a new Treaty aimed at deepening ties between the two countries.

The Treaty attempts to pave the way for deeper economic integration, joint military deployments and a 'common culture' in their armed forces. On top of a general push to develop Europe's military capabilities, they will also seek to establish a new 'Franco-German' defence and security council.

Commenting after the Treaty was signed, Zahradil said:

"A Franco-German axis that goes around other Member States to stitch up EU business is exactly what we feared when the UK announced their intention to leave. The EU needs to work in the interests of all its Member States, not just the biggest two.

"The Aachen treaty also proves how important it will be to maintain the principle of unanimity in the Council on foreign policy. No other Member State is going to feel comfortable giving up their veto if it's just for Paris and Berlin to take the reins, especially if there is such a strong push for a 'European defence' policy at the expense of NATO.

"If the EU's two largest states want to work together that's up to them. But it shouldn't be an attempt to control everyone else - individual countries are best placed to decide what's best for them, this means keeping autonomy on foreign policy, taxation and migration." ■

AFRICA SUMMIT By working together we can make a real difference

The future of relations between African and European nations must be mutually beneficial and interdependent, said ECR Group co-Chair Syed Kamall at the opening of the ECR's first ever Africa Summit in Brussels.

Opening the summit with European Parliament President Antonio Tajani, Syed Kamall talked of the growing importance of Africa as an economic player over the coming decades as well as the need for greater cooperation in order to face up to the biggest challenges of the 21st century.

Bringing together politicians, international organisations, business people and policy experts, delegates were taking part in a range of panels discussing challenges as health, democracy, security and investment as well as the shape of relations in the future. Guests also debated the growth of emerging technology and how some innovations were starting to create and address common challenges such as financial and digital exclusion.

Speaking during the summit, Kamall said:

"Africa is a continent of the future. In Europe, we have to change fundamentally our approach. We must stop seeing this relationship as one of providing development aid and financial support or based on the colonialism of the past."



"Looking ahead, we need to recognise that our shared projects and policies, both at the national and the European level, haven't always been a success. But we can agree on the positives that closer and better relations between our peoples, businesses and countries can bring."

"Ahead of us we are facing a number of incredible opportunities. Opportunities to show just what can be achieved through cooperation, where there is mutual benefit, to take on some of the 21st century's biggest challenges, such as security, pollution, poverty, health and education." ■

Blocking terrorist content online

New EU-wide legislation to tackle terrorist content posted online has been recently unveiled by ECR MEP Daniel Dalton. His draft report adds teeth to the existing code of practice while maintaining an emphasis on voluntary action. The report was considered by the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee and it is hoped it will be voted on by all MEPs before the European elections.

There would be a requirement on platforms to remove terrorist content within an hour if instructed to do so by national authorities, but punitive fines of up to four per cent of a company's turnover would only be levied if platforms repeatedly failed to comply.

Sites that are regularly targeted by terrorist content could be asked to introduce targeted monitoring of posts but must pay "particular regard to the fundamental rights of users and the importance of free speech.

Mr Dalton builds upon the European Commission's original proposals by providing greater protection for small businesses, which may not be able to meet the 60 minute deadline, and suggesting that cloud infrastructure services for companies be removed from the scope of the legislation as they do not control data and cannot remove specific content.

UK MEP Mr Dalton said:

"There is clearly a problem with terrorist material circulating unchecked on the internet for too long. Law



enforcement authorities have made clear to me that terrorist content disseminates most rapidly in the first hour and that the one hour principle is vital. This propaganda can be linked to actual terrorist incidents and although the existing voluntary code adopted by platforms has brought improvements, it now needs to be backed up with legislation."

"However, the steps we take must be practical and proportionate if we are to safeguard free speech. Without

a fair process we risk the over-removal of content as businesses would understandably take a safety first approach to defend themselves."

"It is also important to ensure that proactive measures introduced by platforms do not lead to a general monitoring of content by the back door."

Mr Dalton added:

"I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure we have a strong and united European Parliament position on this important legislation." ■



ECR MEPs call on the European Commission to fight female genital mutilation

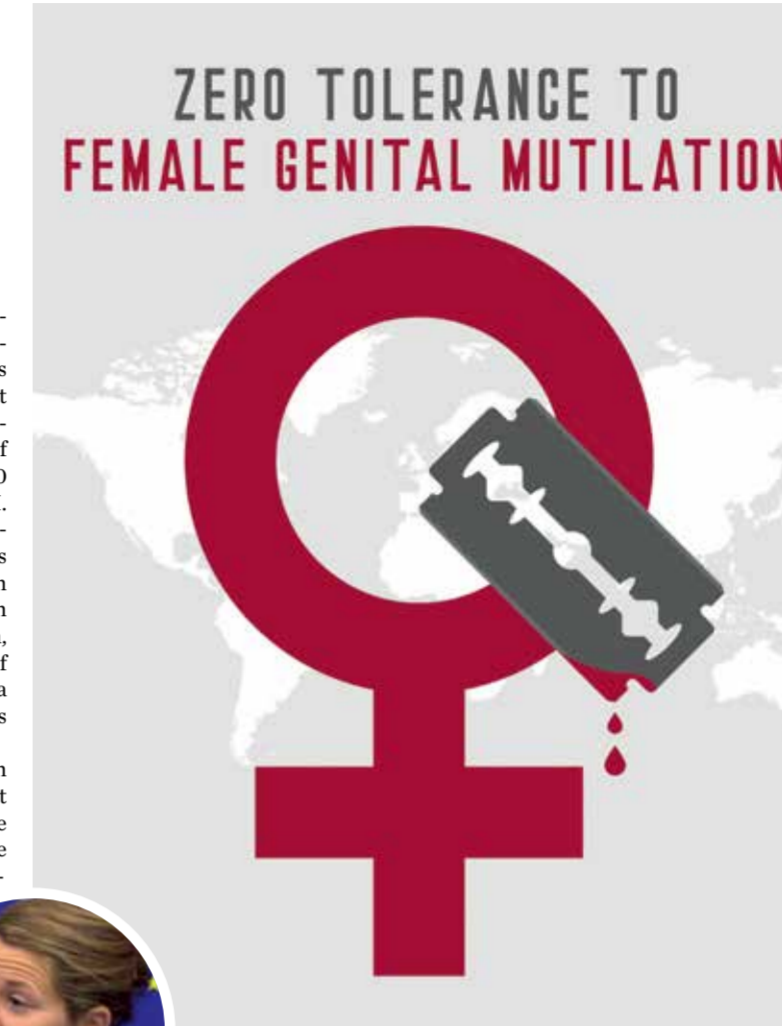
More funding for medical research and an increase in preventative measures were cited as two key factors in the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM) at a hearing on the issue organised on 5th of February by ECR Flemish MEP, Anneleen Van Bossuyt, to mark the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation.

Referring to the Belgian situation with fellow N-VA member, Assita Kanko, who is herself a survivor of FGM, Van Bossuyt explained that an estimated 200 million women worldwide are victims of the practice. In Belgium alone, 4000 girls are at risk of falling victim to FGM.

Together, the two Flemish politicians warned that the practice is becoming an increasingly European problem: "An estimated half a million women living in the European Union, are either victims of FGM at risk of becoming victims. It is no longer a purely African problem. We Europeans cannot ignore the risk of FGM."

Speaking ahead of the event, Mrs. Van Bossuyt said: "Prevention is the most important step. More than 90% of these girls become victims of FGM before the age of 15. Teachers, social workers, doctors, and border officials can play a crucial role in preventing this from occurring. When young girls travel to countries presenting a high risk of FGM, this must sound an alarm, prompting a conversation with families. It is often during these trips that the practice occurs. Given the increasing instances of FGM right here in the European Union, we also need to put in place preventative EU measures to protect girls from the practice."

Mrs. Van Bossuyt argues for more European support for victims and for



doctors who possess the medical knowledge to reverse the effects of FGM, so let us use them."

The Flemish MEP now calls on the European Commission to make fighting female genital mutilation a key policy theme in the next mandate. "It is a problem that must not only be tackled at the level of development cooperation, but also at the European level, and thus requires more attention", she concluded. ■

European Parliament calls for close security ties with UK post-Brexit



MEPs approved a new plan to fight terrorism today that calls for the EU to have a close security partnership with the UK after it leaves the bloc.

The call was included in the European Parliament's Special Committee on Terrorism's final report which emphasized that it is "crucial to ensure a continuation of the mutual security cooperation and exchange of information between the EU and the UK post-Brexit". The committee has spent the last year examining ways in which it

might improve the EU's response to the recent wave of attacks across Europe and its recommendations will now be voted on by the European Parliament in December.

Geoffrey Van Orden MEP, Vice-Chairman of the committee and the only British member, said: "I welcome the decision that recognizes Britain's enormous expertise and capabilities in counter-terrorism. It's in the interest of the whole of Europe for the EU to ensure seamless continuity in the security relationship with Britain."

Mr Van Orden, who is also Conservative Security and Defence Spokesman, added: "We should be under no illusion that those who wish us harm and seek to disrupt our societies are continuously plotting attacks. The very same night that MEPs were considering this report, a gunman attacked Strasbourg's Christmas market. It is vital that we continue to work together to keep our citizens safe, and not allow EU dogma to weaken our common efforts to combat terrorism." ■

Geoffrey Van Orden MEP EU must review Zimbabwe sanctions



"The EU should review its sanctions against individuals in Zimbabwe following the brutal crackdown on opposition forces", Conservative Security and defence spokesman Geoffrey Van Orden MEP has stated.

While arrests have been targeted against MPs, and opposition and civil society leaders, at the same time, arbitrary beatings and arrests are taking place. A dozen rapes by out-of-control soldiers have been reported. Some 1,200 people have been detained in the past few days. 43 opposition MPs and councillors are known to have been forced into hiding.

Mr Van Orden, who has led the parliamentary opposition in Brussels to Zimbabwean tyranny over nearly two decades, commented:

"Some have described the brutality of the last few days as worse than the Mugabe era. Power struggles within the regime are being played out on the streets and the people are the victims.

"The main driver of the brutality seems to be army chief Constantino Chiwenga pushing to entrench his personal power through his predatory rogue state, by crushing what has been described as 'treasonous cockroaches' - the vibrant opposition which garnered over 2.6 million votes in the 2018 election.

"In my conversation this afternoon with senior opposition leaders in Zimbabwe returning from court hearings, they called for the military

to stop the shooting; to keep out of people's homes; and to release those detained.

"We ask what has happened to the President Mnangagwa who promised such optimistic, positive change, and mutual respect for the common humanity of all the Zimbabwean people when he came to power a year ago.

"President Mnangagwa now needs to assert himself and regain control over the armed forces. He should release detainees immediately and invite leaders of the opposition, of the unions, and the churches, to a National Conference on the Future of Zimbabwe.

"And there must be real accountability for the brutal abuses of the past few days. The EU should immediately review its sanctions targeted against abusive leading individuals in Zimbabwe and include General Chiwenga and his cohort.

"We must hope that action will now be taken in Zimbabwe so that the United Kingdom, the EU, the Commonwealth and the southern African countries can once more engage in helping put that potentially bountiful, rich country back on the road to security and prosperity for all its people." ■

Tackling strategic propaganda

The EU needs to do more to counter hostile disinformation, warned ECR MEP Anna Fotyga after her report on the Strategic Communications (StratCom) policy of the EU's External Action Service was adopted by the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee.

Concerns over Russian disinformation campaigns that attempt to undermine Western democracies, and have continued to grow over recent years, have become a priority for a number of governments. With an annual budget of over €1.1m, the EEAS's StratCom Task Force was established in 2015 to address Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns, and in the past four years they have identified over 3 800 disinformation cases.

Fotyga's report reviews the progress of the Task Force and underlines the important role of an independent media as the best safeguard against disinformation, while also calling for a robust legal framework in order to better respond to hybrid threats. It also focuses on social media and its potential role both in spreading and countering false information and recommends that the EU should support civil society, private institutions, academia and the wider media in further enhancing measures aimed at exposing propaganda.

Speaking after the vote, Fotyga, who chairs Parliament's Security and Defence sub-Committee, said:

"We need to be more active in countering hostile disinformation and Member States in the EU are encouraged to evaluate the situation within



their territories. Today we are calling for this to be prioritised at the EU level and how to change the approach of our institutions and address the role of Artificial Intelligence and new technologies in advancing this threat.

"There is an urgent need for in-depth analysis and research of the impact and effectiveness of hostile propaganda so that we can develop measures to successfully counteract them. We have always stated that it is essential to uphold freedom of speech and media pluralism, which are at the heart of resilient democratic societies, and we should pursue any approach to counter disinformation responsibly." ■



In Europe WALLS WORK

In stark contrast to some public statements, European leaders and policy makers have been learning from experience the value of frontier security.

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

During that peak year, this path, known as the Western Balkans migration route, became the most traveled migration route to Europe. To put it in perspective, in 2012, the number of recorded, illegal border crossings in Hungary was around 2,000. In 2013, the number grew to 18,000, and in 2014, it climbed to 41,000. In 2015, the number of border violations reached 391,000, an increase of roughly 20,000 percent over the three-year period and approximately three illegal crossings every four minutes in the peak year. Many of these migrants navigated the route with the help of human traffickers.

This uncontrolled, illegal immigration posed serious problems for countries on the receiving end. With media reports and warnings from British intelligence that terrorist organizations were exploiting the migrant routes and lax border security, the migration crisis raised serious security concerns. It saw increased crime rates and put a heavy burden on the social welfare systems of the EU economies. It also threatened one of the most significant achievements of Europe's common market: the freedom of borderless travel within the 26 countries of Europe's Schengen Area. As a country on the external border of Schengen, Hungary was among the first to feel the full impact.

Hungary leads the way

The crisis tested the resolve of the Budapest government. In contrast with Brussels, the government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán viewed the migration crisis as an existential crisis that had to be solved. In response, the Hungarian government established a policy that the border must be strengthened and migration reduced to absolute minimum. Soon, the Hungarian government announced the construction of a series of physical barriers.

Between 2015 and 2017 hundreds of miles of border fencing were erected at the country's southern and western borders. The explicit aim of the fence was to stop the uncontrolled influx of illegals across Hungary's portion of the EU's external border. The external border was to be reinforced with the construction of a four meter-tall, high-tech fence. "It is certain, that wherever there is great migration pressure," said György Bakondi, the prime minister's chief security advisor, "technical barriers are an important tool for making the movement stoppable."

The first phase of Hungary's southern border barrier was raised along the border with Serbia, a two meter-high barbed wire obstacle followed by the erection of the main fence, reaching four meters. Once all the 175 kilometers of the Hungary-Serbia border were protected constructions began on the Croatian and Romanian borders. Official border crossings remained open to handle regular international traffic and legal crossings.

The physical border barrier, which in reality is a set of fences accompanied by motion detection systems and thermal cameras, is working as intended. It enables the Hungarian government to deliver on its asylum policy. Asylum seekers can apply for refugee status, but they can no longer enter – or, cross through – the country illegally in order to file applications in other European Union Member States. As part of the new migration



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The cultural and psychological urge to claim that walls don't work maybe is the result of a romantic picture of Europe, with free movement open borders that came about as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

regime, asylum seekers have to wait in transit zones in Serbia to have their application examined. The waiting time is approximately one year.

European Commission rejected walls

One of the reasons Hungary's government took the lead was that the chaos during the migration crisis undermined EU Regulation commonly known as the Dublin Convention, which demands the migrant seeks asylum in the first EU country in which they set foot. Migrants do not have the right to choose which country they register in or where they submit the application for asylum.

The Hungarian government asked that the European Commission, the EU's executive branch to reimburse half of the extraordinary border protection expenses arguing that their taxpayers had spent large amounts to keep their fellow European citizen's safe from uncontrolled migration, and that protection of the European Union's external borders is a prerequisite for the EU to uphold internal free movement. The European Commission rejected the request saying that the EU did "not financing the construction of fences or barriers at external borders [...but do] support border management measures at external borders [...such as] surveillance [...and] border control equipment."

Curiously the European Commission and the US Democratic Party share the same view that it is

acceptable to finance border management and control, but there can be no spending on physical barriers. Instead of granting the 400 million euro requested by the Hungarian government the EU decided to launch multiple infringement procedures against the Hungarian government for "incompatibilities" in the country's asylum law.

Media controversy

Illegal immigration has become a front-page topic on both sides of the Atlantic, and debate in both the European Union and the United States on how to respond to rising numbers has provoked heated discussion about border security, particularly the question of walls or other physical barriers on national frontiers.

Hungary's move to erect a physical barrier on a European border naturally courted controversy and earned the government harsh criticism in the media. Some critics claimed that it violated international agreements protecting asylum seekers. Others conjured parallels to the Cold War-era Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall. However, those countries that were bearing the largest burden of the illegal immigration saw that stricter measures had become necessary. "By protecting the Hungarian-Serbian external EU border," said German Chancellor Angela Merkel in an interview in June of last year, "Hungary is protecting Germany, too."

While the border reinforcements have drastically diminished the number of illegal crossings, the threats posed by illegal migration remain. According to Hungarian police estimates, had there been no fence in 2017, more than 44,000 would have crossed the Hungarian border illegally into Europe. "Migration pressure and the number of attempts to illegally cross the border is not decreasing," said a government spokesman, "if weren't for the fence, Hungary would be experiencing the same as it did in 2015, meaning not just a dozen or perhaps a hundred people would be attempting to cross the border every day, but they would be trying continuously, illegal migrants would be arriving in their thousands."

Having built a second line of defense, an additional layer of border fence equipped with the latest technology in border monitoring facilities, Hungary's southern front is, according to Prime Minister Orbán, "capable of keeping out the masses potentially arriving through Turkey." Hungary's success in dramatically reducing illegal border crossing stands as an example for other countries facing similar challenges.

Significance of border security

European heads of government are keenly aware that their colleagues in Budapest in fact helped end a precarious situation. If the Balkan Route would have continued to supply Western Europe with millions of migrants annually, someone else would have had to act.

During the crisis regular Europeans also realized the value of border security. And, since walls work, European countries across the continent are now deploying a mix of physical barriers, electronic monitoring and mobile surveillance technologies in order to secure their external borders. Varying local geographical challenges and different cultural, social and economic norms have led to the development of local solutions for border security, but it is noteworthy that the derided "ancient technology" of a physical border barrier still is highly popular in Europe.

Statistics on the effect of the Hungarian fence have been released. The border barrier yielded immediate results. Two days after the fence was completed along that border, the daily entries fell below forty, according to official sources. On a yearly basis the numbers are equally clear. Early in 2015, records show that some 185,000 illegals crossed to Hungary from Croatia. In 2016, only 18,207 immigrants entered Hungary's territory illegally over the same boarder: and, in 2017, that number fell to 1,405. "The fence lived up to the fundamental expectations that we had at the time of its construction," said Bakondi, "it put an end to mass illegal immigration, monitored border crossing and safeguarded Hungary's internal security."

The cultural and psychological urge to claim that walls don't work maybe is the result of a romantic picture of Europe, with free movement open borders that came about as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall. But, in fact, the Berlin Wall – and, sadly, the very case of the Berlin Wall – may be the prime example of the simple fact that walls do work. ■

GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBOURS

In stark contrast to some public statements, European leaders and policy makers, who often criticized the efforts of the US Republican party to fund a border barrier, have been learning from experience the value of frontier security. In the heart of Europe, France and the British government are expanding an existing border fence with an adjacent wall intended to prevent migrants living in the nearby "jungle" camp from reaching the tracks leading to the Channel Tunnel. Austria has erected a fence on its border with Slovenia, and in the province of South-Tyrol bordering Italy, Greece has constructed a fence on its land border with Turkey. The Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa are surrounded by multiple layers of 19 feet fences. Finland's 883-mile border with Russia is fenced and surveilled electronically as well as by highly mobile K9 patrols. The Baltic nations of Latvia and Estonia have also erected fences on their borders with Russia following the migration crisis. Bulgaria, once considered a gateway to Europe by ISIS, has constructed a 100-mile, 15 feet tall, fence on its border with Turkey. The Bulgarian fence alone has reduced illegal crossings from 11,000 in 2013 to 4,000 in 2014 and is saving millions of euros per month in policing costs according to local newspaper reports.

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New wings for the Bulgarian Air Force

Ever since Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004, successive governments have been hounded by the question of which NATO compatible fighter jets they should acquire for their air force. There have been several failed attempts to organise a tender for modern warplanes. Amidst growing uncertainty in the geopolitical situation of the region, the current government looks determined to take the necessary steps to modernise their armed forces.

Minister of Defence Krassimir Karakachanov recently goaded the Bulgarian National Assembly into approving the government's plan to start negotiations with the United States for eight modern F-16 fighter jets to replace the obsolete MiG-29s that the country bought from the USSR in 1987. Bulgaria's choice of F-16 is a positive signal, which will enhance the country's position in NATO by making its air force compatible with their allies' defence systems. Bulgaria's new fighter jets will also enhance NATO's strategic capabilities in the Black Sea region.

The pro-Russian forces in Bulgarian politics – such as the Bulgarian Socialist Party (successor of the old Communist party), the ABV Party and

the Volya party – were, despite their differences, united in their efforts to prevent the proposed negotiations from passing Parliament. They formed a block whose intention was to derail the endeavour and champion a deal with Russia for new MiG-29s. This effort can only be characterised as absurd, and, ultimately, there was a majority in the

National Assembly to buy a modern F-16 fighter.

The decision is historic and has allowed for Bulgaria's place in NATO to flourish from a mere formal member to one with real capabilities. Furthermore, as part of this arrangement, Bulgaria also looks set to become the next member of NATO to commit to spending 2% of its national budget on defence. ■



Retune the EU

JAN ZAHRADIL

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Soft coup averted in the European Parliament

Establishment parties feeling the heat ahead of the European Election



In late January, a soft coup was averted in the European Parliament. A coalition of the three establishment political groups – the federalist centrist conservatives EPP, the Social Democratic S&D, and the Social Liberal ALDE – together tabled an amendment to tighten the internal parliamentary rules on forming a group in the assembly. The proposed amendment gained majority support (354 votes in favour and 267 votes against the key motion), but because of the need for a supra-majority the proposal didn't pass. The internal rules for group formation in the parliament might sound like an esoteric and unimportant topic, but it caused major controversy since the proposed change would have curtailed the rights of opposition parliamentarians in the decision-making process.

In the European Parliament, much of the political power lies with the political groups. A political group, in essence, is an agglomeration of parliamentarians from different national political parties. In practice, the work of the political can be compared to political parties or factions in national parliaments, though the political groups are often less cohesive than parties in a domestic setting. Since power and resources are channelled to the political groups, those parliamentarians who belong to a political group have more privileges (e.g. financial backing and more speaking time) than the parliamentarians who do not belong to a group.

The rules regulating the formation of a political groups are rather ambiguous. In summary, a political group can be formed by any group of parliamentarians that have a 'political affinity'. Since the 'political affinity' is determined by the parliamentarians themselves, most could find a group to which they could belong. Until now, the 'affinity' rule only impacted small groups of isolated esoteric parliamentarians not welcome in any group (e.g. the Greek neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn).

In practice, this proposed rule change would give the Parliament's Conference of Presidents the right to recommend dissolving political groups if they didn't believe that the group shared sufficient 'political affinity'. In essence, the proposal was to give the political groups that form the majority in parliament the right to dissolve the minority political groups. The majority would be given the right to take away part of the rights, funding and speaking time from minority parliamentarians. In a comment after the vote, Max Andersson, Member of the European Parliament for the Swedish Greens, said, "I didn't support those changes to

the rules on how to constitute a political group that risked drastic or unintended side-effects. Had the entire revision been adopted there would have been a risk that parliamentary groups could be dissolved because they are disliked by the majority. That would have been unacceptable and undemocratic."

Three groups who backed the amendment in the earlier stages are some of the largest groups in the European Parliament. They would never be negatively impacted by the rule change. Unsurprisingly, the change was opposed by the smaller groups, including the Greens, the Eurosceptic and populist groups; groups who could possibly stand to be dissolved as a result of its passing. Those MEPs protesting the change pointed to it being a rule that would have been easy for the majority to abuse.

Jan Zahradil, ECR MEP from the Czech Republic and Spitzenkandidat of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, speaking ahead of the vote, said: "I am more than capable of finding people and parties that I'm happy to sit alongside – I don't need a select group of MEPs to decide if I have affinity with them or not." He then went on to say, "The most worrying thing is that these establishment figures just don't see why it's wrong and only seem to believe in democracy when it works for them."

Jo Leinen, German MEP for the Socialist Democrat Group, argued that the amendment would put an end to "fake groups", by which he meant groups which were created to get the financial and administrative advantages of a political group but whose members were not aligned in voting behaviour and didn't meet regularly in the way the more established political groups typically do.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, MEP from Italy's 5Star Movement, which sits within the EFDD group, said, "Democracy has always relied on protecting the rights of the opposition." The proposed change, Castaldo said, could result in the "dictatorship of the majority" which could "decide arbitrarily if it keeps alive or not political groups that are not aligned with the mainstream."

One speculation as to why the proposed rule change was tabled now is that the establishment parties are expecting to lose their dominant role after the election this spring. If so, groups that the establishment might regard as 'fake' or lacking sufficient 'affinity' could emerge as important players. This change was seen by some as a potential tool to prevent the formation of a major new force which might challenge the status quo. ■



Questionable Media Reporting WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN VENEZUELA?



For a long-time the mainstream medias reporting on the economic and political situation in Venezuela has been questionable. The reporting has been that the economic problem is due to falling oil prices. A typical example is an article published by *The Washington Post* on January 26th entitled, "Venezuela's crisis in 5 charts". Both the first two charts - "Oil production and oil exports remain on the decline" and "When global oil prices tumbled from more than \$100 a barrel in 2014 to less than \$30 at the beginning of 2016, the country's economic woes deepened." - give the oil price as the primary reason for the crisis. On the very same day, the BBC posted almost the exact same article. Theirs offered seven, rather than five, charts.

The comparison that these papers avoid in their 'in-depth analysis' is the discussion of why Norway is doing fine and why all other countries dependent on oil, whilst sometimes experiencing periods of suffering, aren't collapsing. What the media isn't discussing is that it is the policies of the ruling party which have devastated almost all non-oil production, leading to the situation in which oil represents close to 80 percent of the country's exports and foreign currency inflow.

Adding insult to injury, mainstream media have been referring to Juan Guaidó as 'self-proclaimed' or 'self-declared' leader. Just to offer a few examples: CNN posted an article on the 25th of January 2019 calling him "The man who proclaimed himself acting Venezuelan president"; the BBC posted an article on the 29th of January about "The self-declared leader of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó..." saying that "the opposition leader proclaimed himself interim president following large protests..." This is also inaccurate reporting with a left-wing bias.

Here's why: in the 2015 congressional elections, a coalition of opposition political parties, named Mesa de la Unidad (MUD), secured a significant electoral victory over Maduro and his

Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), winning an absolute majority in the Asamblea Nacional. The response from the Maduro camp was to have the hand-picked Supreme Court remove all powers from the recently-elected legislative body, and make all their actions null and void. The Supreme Court invested the power of the legislature in itself and Maduro was given the right to rule through decree. Maduro in 2017 decreed elections for a new body: the constituent national assembly (ANC), who would then take over the functions of the Asamblea Nacional. The opposition boycotted this election calling it fraudulent and unconstitutional and the election was denounced by a large

part of the international community. Furthermore, only about 20 percent of the voting population casted their ballots, most of whom worked in the state sector, as compared to 75 percent in the 2015 elections. President Maduro was elected in 2013 to serve a six-year term ending on 10th January 2019. The opposition boycotted the presidential elections for the same reasons and the international community dismissed the results of the vote, the election of Maduro, as illegitimate. The democratic legitimacy of Guaidó rests on Article 233 of the Venezuelan constitution. It states that "Pending election and inauguration of the new President, the President

of the National Assembly shall take charge of the Presidency of the Republic", and since free and fair elections for the presidency never took place, on 10th January 2019 (the end of Maduro's term), the National Assembly declared the presidency abandoned and voted the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, as Interim President of Venezuela. The mainstream newspapers have failed in their reporting of the two main stories out of Venezuela: the real reason for the economic crisis and the actual legal reality behind the political power struggle. Instead, we are told that the crisis is the result of falling oil prices and the legitimate president is 'self-proclaimed'.

IDU Chairman Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper "The tyranny in Venezuela can come to an end."

The people of Venezuela have made a strong statement that they will no longer tolerate the dictatorial regime of Nicolás Maduro.

The IDU stands with the people of Venezuela and supports the President of the democratically elected National Assembly, Mr. Juan Guaidó, as interim President of Venezuela.

IDU Chairman Stephen Harper stated: "The International Democrat Union recognizes and welcomes Juan Guaidó as interim President of Venezuela. Ever since the National Assembly was democratically constituted on January 5th 2016, the dictatorial regime of Nicolás Maduro has tried to destroy this last stronghold of democracy and has brought the nation to a state of chaos. This once free and prosperous country has been dragged into tyranny and poverty by a criminal group of Chavistas."

In accordance with Article 231 of Venezuelan Constitution, Juan Guaidó took oath before the National Assembly to become the interim President of the Republic. "With this step" Harper argued "and the broad support of the people of Venezuela, the tyranny in Venezuela can finally come to an end. We demand a peaceful transition of power.

The IDU urges all institutions of Venezuela to act in full accordance with the Constitution, to follow legal processes, and to refrain from violence. The IDU also calls upon its members to support interim President Guaidó in his mission to bring democracy and the rule of law back to the people of Venezuela.



The Brain Race

As part of a new strategy, Chinese universities have started offering scholarships to international students on an unprecedented scale. According to China's Ministry of Education, the number of foreigners in full-time education in China has quadrupled in the last ten years, from around 55,000 students in 2006 to almost 210,000 students in 2016. As the Chinese strategy to use higher education as a tool of cultural and political leverage - targeting, it seems, primarily students from low-income countries - really starts taking hold this year, it is expected that the number of foreign students will exceed half a million.

Many observers are sceptical that the official reason for China's commitment to increasing the number of foreign students attending their universities, to create opportunity in the least developed countries, is sincere. It has widely been seen as a move to compete with western scholarships like the Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships in an ideological battle to fortify China's unique brand of socialism. President Xi Jinping gave weight to this theory when, at a national education conference in Beijing in September last year, he said that following the path of socialist education with Chinese characteristics would nurture generations of capable young

people, who would be well-prepared to join the socialist cause. Xi added that students should be encouraged to uphold the Party leadership and the socialist system and guided to love and support the Communist Party of China.

The scholarship packages offered by Chinese Universities can be attractive for many poor students. It includes free accommodation for the duration of the student's stay, free education and a monthly stipend of 3,000 yuan per month (nearly forty percent of the average monthly income in China). China's spending on state education increased by ten per cent from 2016 to 2017, and a further sixteen per cent last year. By contrast, India in the last year cut its spending by 0.4%.

Despite the ideological motives, William Vanbergen, CEO of BE Education, an English educational company based in China, is positive about China's new direction. Speaking to *The Conservative* he said "There're some huge positives to [these scholarships]; one of which is the general exchange of ideas that leads to greater understanding between two different cultures. If people understand each other then there's less likely to be misunderstandings in the future, whether that be economically or politically. So, actually, it creates a much more stable future, in my



opinion." Mr. Vanbergen also told of a group of British students studying at the Fudan University in Shanghai, on scholarships paid for by the Chinese Government, that had founded

a thriving entrepreneurial club at the university. Promoting their Western ideals in a socialist land, they were doing perhaps the exact opposite of what President Xi hoped for.

Whatever its intention, China's new scholarship policy can be expected to further integrate China into the world economy, which can only be a good thing, for China and the rest of us.

Christians are now an endangered species



Until recently Christianity was a relatively strong force in the Middle East, but now the number of those who follow the faith are in steep decline. Last month, it was reported that the number of Christians in Iraq has decreased to a mere 200,000.

All world religions suffer persecution to some extent, but research has repeatedly shown Christians to be the most persecuted religious group. The European Parliament has labeled the violence perpetrated by ISIS as a genocide. The demise of ISIS has, however, not put an end to the persecution.

Sadly, the Iraqi Christians are not alone in their plight. The NGO Open Doors has listed the 50 most dangerous countries for Christians to practice their faith. Islamism is one of the strongest common denominators for countries where Christians suffer persecution, accounting for seven out of the ten worst countries.

Communist North Korea, however, ranks as the most oppressive country of all, with an estimated 70,000 Christians in labour camps. Witness accounts provide a gruesome picture, describing instances where Christians have been crushed by steamrollers.

In countries like Vietnam, China, North Korea and Myanmar there has been an increase in stricter control of religious rights by the state. With the availability of personal digital technology making it easier, authoritarian states are increasingly using face recognition and electronic chips to control their citizens.

In January, Swedish Radio's Middle East correspondent Johan Mathias Sommarström highlighted the unforfeiting reality of Christianity in the Middle East, with the laconic statement that if we "had been talking about animals we would have loudly proclaimed them an endangered species".

New Direction report

GLOBAL EFFORTS TO END CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In 2014, the UK hosted the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. More than 150 states came together with non-governmental organisations, experts and human rights activists. The Summit marked a watershed in the global community's response to this enduring, brutal and sickening stain on mankind's character. For centuries, conflict-related sexual violence has gone virtually unchallenged, unrecorded and unpunished. Syed Kamall MEP, co-chairman of the ECR Group, writing for New Direction's latest publication said "turning a blind eye must no longer be deemed acceptable. While it may take decades, even centuries, to completely eradicate this despicable practice, the international mood has changed from one of complacency and near-collaboration to a real determination to tackle it head on. Let's hope that sexual violence in conflict will no longer be dismissed as though it were somehow an unavoidable by-product of warfare and strife".

This excellent and timely study by New Direction, combines a close re-examination of existing data with details of implications and applications for policy-makers to consider. It will prove to be an important step in refocusing and redefining efforts



to combat sexual violence in conflict - and the European Union's work in co-ordinating them. The report sets out to examine the root causes and the consequences of conflict-related sexual violence and identifies different patterns and types of such violence. It assesses the limitations of international tools to end the problem, and offers a menu of potential policy responses. Throughout, the report, the authors addresses several common myths and misconceptions. For example, not all victims are women

and girls. The majority are; but many men and boys also suffer rape, sexual assault and systematic sexual torture. Conflict-related sexual violence is not exclusively perpetrated by ill-disciplined fighters when command-structures break down. Often the violence is encouraged or directed by commanders, frequently as a means of suppression, control and intimidation. Most shockingly the report finds its not always fighters from conflicted factions who commit the acts. There are records of United Nations peace-keepers and even aid workers who have committed offences of sexual violence.

For many it was events in the former states of Yugoslavia which first increased public awareness and condemnation of sexual violence in armed conflict. But as we look around the world, far from being consigned to history, it is still happening today in countries such as Myanmar, Iraq, Syria and Yemen to name a few. The world may never rid itself of the problem. But it has decided it can no longer just accept it as a fact of life - or of war. This report represent an important impetus - along with some helpful guidelines - for our international determination to tackle a global disgrace with renewed global resolve.



You can download report at www.newdirection.online



The programme of THE CONSERVATIVE

OLD-SCHOOL JOURNALISM - REPORTING YOU CAN TRUST

THE CONSERVATIVE writes for the citizens that are rooted in – and have loyalties to – their neighbourhoods, communities, regions and country. We want to be an outlet for those that take pride in their country's history and heritage without feeling the need to disparage or deride the same feeling in others. We want to give a political voice to those that have a greater feeling of shared destiny with their fellow citizens than with the other gold card holders in the airport lounge.

THE CONSERVATIVE's view is that the key faultline in European politics isn't between different ethnicities, religious affiliations, sexes, social classes, generations, communities, or countries. The fundamental conflict is between those that believe in the citizens' right to come together to discuss and make common decisions (yes, even decisions with which others may disagree) and those that only accept common decisions when they are in accordance with the preferences of the preordained university-educated, urban internationalist, socially liberal agenda. The clashes we see are between those that accept the outcome of elections and referenda they dislike and those that strive to undermine the legitimacy of the office holders with which they disagree, or immediately demand a second referenda when the voters 'have been fooled' and 'got it wrong'.

THE CONSERVATIVE believes in free speech and in the informative potential of an open, polite and vigorous debate. Our quarrel is with those unmoored ostrich-like sophisticates who believe that they have the moral right to ostracise their fellow citizens – or, as they see it, the hoi polloi – for discussing issues that fall outside the cognoscente myopia of a woke safe-space seminar. We believe that a key litmus test of open debate is that someone potentially could be offended. We don't endorse causing gratuitous offence to others, but neither do we believe in a right not to be offended. Since just about anything can offend someone, a newspaper must risk causing offence to be a catalyst for change.

We publish today the first edition of the bi-weekly newspaper **THE CONSERVATIVE**. We aim to fill a in the newspaper market as a forthright and unflinchingly conservative newspaper and will serve as a counterweight to the liberal left-of-centre establishment internationalism that dominates most news outlets.



THE CONSERVATIVE acknowledges the unique democratic legitimacy of the nation-state, and recognises the rule of law and equality of all citizens before the law as fundamental preconditions of a just society.

THE CONSERVATIVE favours the exercise of power at the lowest practicable level. In an open society that respects the dignity and autonomy of the individual, the important role of civil associations, families and other bodies that fill the space between the individual and the government must be cherished, because it is these institutions which keep us all free from state coercion.

THE CONSERVATIVE believes that the natural liberties of the individual include the freedom of religion and worship, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of movement and association, freedom of contract and employment, and freedom from oppressive, arbitrary or punitive taxation.

THE CONSERVATIVE wishes to see a continent-wide cooperation of independent democratic states and nations. We believe such a project only can be successful if it is deferential to the right of each nation to preserve and transmit their unique version of our common civilisation - their culture - to future generations.

THE CONSERVATIVE accepts that there are no ideal societies and believes that all social orders can be improved. The development of our civilisation and different cultures primarily takes place through experimentation, competition and mimicking that which is successful. We therefore have faith in in competition. Competition between individuals in accordance with the meritocratic ideal; between firms in accordance with the ideal of the free market; between nations and states in accordance with the ideal of peaceful institutional competition.

THE CONSERVATIVE rejects all forms of extremism, authoritarianism and racism. ■



Politics needs a FIRST-PERSON PLURAL



Populists recruit their following by direct appeal, are largely indifferent to their opponents, and have no intention, if elected, of allowing a voice to those who did not vote for them. If "populism" threatens the political stability of democracies, it is because it is part of a wider failure to appreciate the virtue and the necessity of representation. For representative government to work, representatives must be free to ignore those who elected them, to consider each matter on its merits, and to address the interests of those who did not vote for them just as much as the interests of those who did. The point was made two centuries ago by Edmund Burke that representation, unlike delegation, is an *office*, defined by its responsibilities. To refer every matter to the constituents and to act on majority opinion case by case is precisely to avoid those responsibilities, to retreat behind the consensus, and to cease to be genuinely accountable for what one does.

In modern conditions, in which governments rarely enjoy a majority vote, most of us are living under a government of which we don't approve. We accept to be ruled by laws and decisions made by politicians with whom we disagree, and whom we perhaps deeply dislike. How is that possible? Why don't democracies constantly collapse, as people refuse to be governed by those they never voted for? Why do the protests of disenfranchised voters crying "not my president!" peter out, and why has there been after all no mass exodus of liberals to Canada?

The answer is that democracies are held together by something stronger than politics. There is a "first person plural", a pre-political loyalty, which causes neighbours who voted in

opposing ways to treat each other as fellow citizens, for whom the government is not "mine" or "yours" but "ours", whether or not we approve of it. Many are the flaws in this system of government, but one feature gives it an insuperable advantage over all others so far devised, which is that it makes those who exercise power accountable to those who did not vote for them. This kind of accountability is possible only if the electorate is bound together as a "we". Only if this "we" is in place can the people trust the politicians to look after their interests. Trust enables people to co-operate in ensuring that the legislative process is reversible, when it makes a mistake; it enables them to accept decisions that run counter to their individual desires and which express views



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plebiscite or social media. But the observation also reminds us that accountable politics depends on mutual trust. We must trust our political opponents to acknowledge that they have the duty to represent the people as a whole, and not merely to advance the agenda of their own political supporters.

But what happens when that trust disintegrates? In particular, what happens when the issues closest to people's hearts are neither discussed nor mentioned by their representatives, and when these issues are precisely issues of identity – of "who we are" and "what unites us"? This, it seems to me, is where we have got to in Western democracies – in the United States just as much as in Europe. And recent events on both continents would be

been jeopardised not only by the global economy and the rapid decline of indigenous ways of life, but also by the mass immigration of people with other languages, other customs, other religions, other ways of life and other and competing loyalties. Worse than this is the fact that ordinary people have been forbidden to mention this, forbidden to complain about it publicly, forbidden even to begin the process of coming to terms with it by discussing what the costs and benefits might be.

It is in these circumstances that we witness the rise of the populists. Marine Le Pen in France, Jeremy Corbyn in Britain, Nicola Sturgeon in Scotland and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands have very little in common when it comes to ideology. But they share one important feature, which is that they represent factions within the electorate, and not the electorate as a whole. They seek the widest possible support, but have little or no intention of compromising with those who do not offer it. There is a politics of slogans, banners and people on the march.

True democrats are not like that. They are not in the business of recruiting people to a cause, and imposing their goals by majority opinion. They are in the business of government, which means discussion and compromise with those who disagree with them. The populist leads a crowd, with a banner marked "Forward to victory!" Victory means overcoming opposition and then destroying it, in the manner of Lenin and Hitler, who worked by charisma, hysteria and mass enchantment in order to ascend to the pinnacle of power. True democrats cannot play that game. They aim to lead a civil society, not a crowd, and if they had a banner it would say merely "Hesitate!" – not, you will agree, a winning slogan. ■

“ We accept to be ruled by laws and decisions made by politicians with whom we disagree, and whom we perhaps deeply dislike. How is that possible? Why don't democracies constantly collapse, as people refuse to be governed by those they never voted for? Why do the protests of disenfranchised voters crying “not my president!” peter out, and why has there been after all no mass exodus of liberals to Canada? ”

of the nation and its future that they do not share. And it enables them to do this because they can look forward to an election in which they have a chance to rectify the damage.

That simple observation reminds us that representative democracy

injects hesitation, circumspection and accountability into the heart of government – qualities that play no part in the emotions of the crowd. Representative government is for this reason infinitely to be preferred to direct appeals to the people, whether by referendum,

less surprising if the media and the politicians had woken up earlier to the fact that Western democracies – all of them without exception – are suffering from a crisis of identity. The “we” that is the foundation of trust and the *sine qua non* of representative government has

THE CONSERVATIVE



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DEMOCRATIC SELF-GOVERNMENT REQUIRES NATIONALISM



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The two most important words in politics are: who decides? Today throughout the West the central issue is whether government is based on the consent of the governed or whether previously democratic peoples will be ruled against their consent by supranational institutions and global forces beyond their control.

The Brexit referendum was a defining moment in early 21st century global politics. Through Brexit, the British people re-affirmed the greatest political right of all, the right of a free people to rule themselves. Western conservatives should not hesitate to celebrate the reassertion of democratic self-government – that is, democratic sovereignty – in the United Kingdom.

Today, the democratic nation-state is the primary institution that ensures the existence of a just political system in which the rulers are responsible to, and chosen by, the ruled. As Michael Gove put it succinctly during the Brexit debate: “the laws we must obey... should be decided by the people we choose and who we can throw out.” Instead, European Union membership means that British laws “are decided by politicians from other nations who we never elected and can’t throw out”.

Supporters of the supranational authority of the European Union argue the system remains consensual because

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Without patriotism no consensual regime will survive.”

power has been delegated by democratic nation-state officials to the EU’s supranational institutions. Significantly, however, both the Enlightenment philosopher John Locke and the American statesman Alexander Hamilton specifically repudiated this type of delegation of authority that transfers sovereignty or self-government from one political entity to different political entity. Locke writes in his famous *Second Treatise* that if the “legislative” (parliament) delivers “the people into the subjection of a foreign power” it “change[s] the legislative.” Locke states that the concept of a “free and independent society, to be governed by its own laws: this is lost, whenever they are given up into the power of another”.

Echoing Locke, Alexander Hamilton declared that sovereign legislative decision-making cannot be delegated away under the American Constitution. Hamilton wrote that: “a delegated authority cannot alter the constituting act... An agent cannot model his own commission. A treaty, for example, cannot transfer the legislative power to the executive.”

If the democratic nation-state is the primary institution of a free society, its sovereignty and liberty cannot be taken for granted but is sustained only by the patriotism of its citizens. As political thinkers from Plato and Aristotle to Montesquieu, Madison, Burke, and Tocqueville have reminded us, without patriotism no consensual regime will survive.

Conservative voters and conservative politicians are naturally drawn to patriotism, to national traditions, national identity, and the patrimony of one’s own nation. But what should be the conservative approach to nationalism? Let us examine the different types of nationalism.

There is aggressive nationalism, often exhibited by authoritarian states, that is belligerent towards foreigners and in some cases seeks military conquests. But we already have more precise words to deal with this negative behaviour: jingoism for the glorification of war and military conquest, and chauvinism for contempt for other nations. Thus the use of the term “nationalist” is gratuitous in cases

where jingoist or chauvinist are more accurate.

On the other hand, self-governing free societies cannot exist without patriotism, which is synonymous with democratic nationalism. There can be no democracy without the nation-state and no nation (and no conservative politics, for that matter) will survive without nationalist sentiments. As the *National Review* editor, Rich Lowry, put it: “Nationalist sentiments are natural and can’t be beaten out of people if you try. It would be a strange... conservatism that lacked any foundation in them.” Lowry and his colleague Ramesh Ponnuru called on fellow conservatives to embrace an “enlightened nationalism.”

The Israeli politician Natan Shtrasky argued that “nationalism has been a powerful weapon in defending the free world against aggression”. During the Second World War, democratic nationalism, as articulated by Churchill, Roosevelt, and de Gaulle was a main inspiration for resistance to the Nazi German empire (which in Hitler’s view was more Aryan racialist and imperialist than a regime primarily focused on German nationalism and German national interest).

After World War II the conservative renaissance in the West under Reagan, Thatcher, de Gaulle, and Begin was imbued with the spirit of democratic nationalism, in opposition to a social democratic-style Western Left that was becoming increasingly transnationalist. As democratic nationalists (and conservatives) both de Gaulle and Thatcher (despite their economic and foreign policy differences) favoured a Europe of sovereign nation-states rather than the supranational entity that the EU has become.

During the 1980s in the United States two leading thinkers of neo-conservatism, Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz, unhesitatingly described President Reagan as a nationalist. Podhoretz defined patriotism as a “love of” one’s country and nationalism as “pride in” one’s country, and noted that Reagan promoted both. But whatever the different definitions, the connection between conservatives and patriotism and nationalism is fundamental and cannot be denied. As the Israeli philosopher, Yoram Hazony, observed: “Conservatives have been nationalists since the days Disraeli wrote novels.”

There are some who argue that conservatives should adopt a “patriotism good, nationalism bad” stance. But this manner of thinking makes too many concessions to anti-national identity forces and, thus, often leads to a watered-down form of “patriotism” that is hesitant vigorously to defend one’s culture, heritage, history, and national traditions, without which a free democratic society will not survive.

Conservatives, whether Anglosphere free marketeers, Gaullist continentalists, or some fusionist combination, such as Likud in Israel or the centre-Right coalition in Denmark, should stand firm. We should proudly say: yes, we are for patriotism, democratic nationalism, and the sovereign right of a free people to rule themselves. And this includes the right of societal reproduction – that is, the right of a free people to perpetuate their own cultures, institutions, and ways of life through an immigration and assimilation policy that is based on the principle of government by the consent of the governed. ■



WE NEED A CONSERVATIVE POPULISM



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Brexit vote in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the US have been described as demonstrating “the return of populism”. The emergence over the years of other Western political leaders such as Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, and Beppe Grillo in Italy has also been seen as part of this phenomenon. Even in the East, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Japan’s Shinzo Abe, and Narendra Modi in India all seem to have been cast from a similar mould.

Although these politicians are as ideologically diverse as can be, they are all considered “populists”. This is confusing – and raises important questions about the very meaning and usefulness of the term. One might even argue that the *only* thing certain is that the term “populism” is used loosely and inconsistently.

It’s worth recalling that the term “populism” is of a rather recent vintage. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary informs us that its first known use was in 1891, when it was used to describe certain political movements in the US. Those movements, according to a retrospective in *The Week*, were motivated by the belief that “the will of ordinary citizens should prevail over that of a privileged elite.”

The populist movements of today share this same belief – though one could argue that their struggle is far greater, since elites today are more powerful than ever before. They have consolidated power and influence to unimaginable degrees, and created a “managerial society”, as has been documented by thinkers as diverse as James Burnham, Charles Murray, and Ryszard Legutko.

If we were to believe what policymakers, the media, and the *bien*

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pensants tell us, we would have to consider all of today’s populist movements “dangerous” and a threat to democracies everywhere. The political scientist Jan-Werner Müller, from his own privileged perch at Princeton University, even suggests that “exclusivity” and a “rejection of pluralism” lie at the very core of populism, subtly raising the spectre of authoritarianism. But nothing could be further from the case – unless one willingly ignores some salient facts.

First, Western populist movements today are not toppling democratic governments. Although populist candidates have indeed won surprising victories at the polls in some places, they have failed elsewhere. And, contrary to expectations, the triumph of the “Leave” campaign in Britain and Trump in the US did not translate into electoral victories for, say, Norbert

Hofer in Austria or Marine Le Pen in France.

Second, not *all* populist movements or candidates can be considered threats to democracy. As Daniel Hannan has written, “populism is not intrinsically a bad thing”. Whether or not a given populist politician is “dangerous” depends principally on his policy prescriptions.

For example, despite what alarmists in Brussels, Washington, and the media have averred, not all populist movements are “on the right”. *Podemos* in Spain, and the coalition of Greek parties known as Syriza are *both* considered populist, but they are on the far Left of the political spectrum, advocating destructive policies that could very well put their respective societies firmly on what Hayek called the road to serfdom. The only thing they share with other, more benign populist movements is an opposition to corrupt,

indifferent, and unaccountable elites.

What is clear is that, in the end, the beliefs or principles one abides by really *do* matter—and ideas, as the American thinker Richard M. Weaver told us nearly 70 years ago, have consequences. So it is imperative that populist movements be inspired by the right ideas.

What are those “right ideas”? Naturally, this is one of the most basic questions of political philosophy. But especially apt is the term “conservative populism”, an outlook that prioritises sovereignty and self-determination, the idea of ordered liberty, and a return to “such traditional sources of self-definition as national identity, religious affiliation, and specific cultural rootedness”, in the words of Roger Kimball.

It is important to recognise that for the average voter frustrated with the *status quo*, it sometimes matters little whether a populist movement is on the Right or Left. What matters more is whether such a movement ably channels their discontent.

Such indifference to core ideas should not be taken lightly. In fact, it underscores the importance of making sure that today’s populist movements and their adherents understand and are inspired by *conservative* ideas – so that conservative populism may truly be in the ascendant and Left-wing or “illiberal” populism may wither on the vine.

In the end, the *only* way forward is for those of us who believe in the Anglo-American tradition of “ordered liberty” to seek the success of a legitimate “conservative populism” – one that may dethrone the artificial oligarchies that rule over us (on both sides of the Atlantic) and which will help democratic citizens everywhere, in the words of Steve Bannon, “deconstruct the administrative state”. ■



CONSERVATIVES SHOULD CHANNEL PEOPLE'S ANGER



The Reverend Ben Johnson
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Since the War of Independence, the American self-image has set individual liberty against oligarchic power. Abraham Lincoln encapsulated this when he described the American experiment as a government “of the people, by the people, for the people”. Perhaps it was inevitable that populism, in the form of the People's Party, was born on US soil – and that, as it experiences a modern-day resurgence, it begins in the United States.

The original Populists described themselves as “the plain people” fighting dark, malevolent forces seeking to “own the people”. However, their target was not the unaccountable power of absolute monarchy, but corporations. And their solution was not constitutionally limited government. Instead, their platform stated “that the power of government – in other words, of the people – should be expanded... as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land”. To that end they demanded a graduated income tax, nationalisation of unpopular industries like banks, increased federal regulation of others, and an inflationary monetary system to water down their debts.

The platform was written in part by Ignatius Donnelly, who wrote extensive (to his mind) non-fiction about the history of Atlantis. Some 125 years later, while everyone has discarded Donnelly's geographical musings, politicians continue to repeat his equally discredited economic and political prescriptions. The popularity of Bernie Sanders and the Democratic Party's

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Abraham Lincoln encapsulated this when he described the American experiment as a government “of the people, by the people, for the people”.”

sentimental leader, Elizabeth Warren, shows the extent to which the party is captivated by Left-wing populism.

Warren pledged allegiance to populism before the Campaign for America's Future in 2014. “I'm told you've spent much of the day talking about populism – about the power of the people to make change in this country,” she told conference attendees. “This is something I believe in deeply.” As an example of a grassroots policy, she touted her role in creating the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Her choice was unintentionally revelatory.

The CFPB, which has vast powers over wide swaths of the US economy, is one of the least responsive agencies of the federal government. Its director serves for a five-year term – deliberately longer than the president's four-year tenure – and can only be fired for cause. Since the CFPB receives its budget directly from the Federal Reserve, Congress holds no leverage over it. The CFPB has been accused of violating regulatory norms in order to punish the Left's political enemies. This unaccountable bureaucracy is a perfect exhibit of the “populist” Left's policies: imperious, centralised, undemocratic cronyism.

The CFPB reveals a central fact of populism: policies enacted to establish control by the government – in

the name of “the people,” as Donnelly insisted – end up moving real decision-making ever further from the reach of the average citizen. One individual may exert definitive influence at a school board meeting, slightly less sway with a state legislator, and virtually none over the president. But a CFPB that cannot be influenced by two of the three branches of government could hardly be less democratic. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Warren exhorts her fellow Democrats to focus on regulation instead of taxation in her new book, *This Fight is Our Fight*.

As policy ascends the rungs of government, it becomes more swayed by the very corporate titans it was intended to rein in. Thus, the industry codes drawn up during the first widespread attempt at national regulation, the New Deal, were written by the largest – and most politically connected – corporations, and ruthlessly enforced to put their competitors out of business. “The teachings of experience” tell us these policies disfranchise the consumer, who had been able to vote with his dollars, and empower politicians influenced by political contributions. Today's populist Left promotes centralisation and then wonders aloud about “regulatory capture.”

The regulatory state inevitably falls victim to what James Burnham called “the managerial revolution.” Populism is its *mythos*. A technocracy, he wrote, cannot be “openly expressed [as a] function of keeping the ruling class in power over the rest of society. The ideology must ostensibly speak in the name of ‘humanity’, ‘the people’, ‘the race’, ‘the future’, ‘God’, ‘destiny’, and so on.”

Further, government patronage inevitably breeds contempt for its recipients among the ruling elites allegedly representing their interests. Senator Huey “Kingfish” Long of Louisiana, who likely would have run for president had he not been assassinated in 1935, used state largesse to corral independent-minded state legislators. After a meeting in which one lawmaker accepted graft in exchange for voting against his constituents' views, Long rebuffed his handshake. “I paid for you,” Long told the elected official. “I don't have to shake your hand.” Multiply the amount of largesse by a correlative level of contempt, and the result is Venezuela, where another election has been stolen and the government shoots citizens down in the streets, in the name of the people.

In the US context, in time government regulations devolve into naked favouritism. Preferred labour unions and influential industries get guaranteed government loans or bailouts. This, in turn, sparks another populist revolt, demanding a new round of government regulations, starting the cycle afresh.

The good news is that the populist moment has the potential to become the liberty moment. The concerns that drive the populist impulse are legitimate – and give conservatives a chance to offer real solutions.

In her speech, Warren complained that “big banks... got bailed out” under the Bush administration. Conservatives also oppose bank bailouts, albeit from altogether different premises. We believe the government should not be in the business of bailing out failing businesses, that federal handouts encourage cronyism, and that the surest way to break the power of the regnant corporate-government-academic nexus is to strip the bureaucracy of its excess money and power.

Warren blasted “tax loopholes and subsidies that go to rich and profitable corporations.” We oppose subsidies of any kind, because we do not believe the government should be picking winners and losers. Generally, we support a lower, flatter, more uniform system of taxation free of carve-outs for special interests. Without favours, there is no favouritism.

The same issues impelling American voters toward the populist Left are at work across the transatlantic sphere. Populism has displaced “liberalism” as the third most popular political ideology in free Europe, according to the 2017 “Authoritarian Populism Index,” a project of the Swedish think tank Timbro and the European Policy Information Centre. The study used six markers to identify populists, including having “the self-image that they are in conflict with a corrupt and crony elite”, they are “highly critical of the EU”, and they make “promises of dramatic change”.

European conservatives battle an insular elite, largely based in Brussels. EU Structural and Cohesion Funds “have become the largest source of corruption in Central and Eastern Europe”, according to the Slovakian MEP Richard Sulik. And while conservative principles demand prudent execution, a truly conservative government would be dramatically smaller (and less costly) than the lumbering behemoths stretching from Lisbon to Helsinki.

Conservatism is prepared to offer a compelling counter-narrative and proven solutions to these problems. Left-wing populism merely deepens them in its self-perpetuating cycle of centralisation. Like Atlantis, the economic planks of populism should be reclassified as mythology. ■

SPECIAL FEATURE

THE CONSERVATIVE

FAITH & FREEDOM

ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Freedom of Religion is one of the most important fundamental rights, considered by the European Court of Human Rights as one of the foundations of a “democratic society”, and amongst the most essential factors that constitute the identity of believers, non-believers and their views on life. There is no doubt that every citizen in the European Union should be able to enjoy freedom of religion or belief, whatever faith he or she chooses, as well as to choose none. Meanwhile, in

the European Union institutions, many become extremely reticent when there is a question relating to concerns about freedom of religion or belief in our member states. Organisation of religion is a matter falling under the competence of national authorities, however we are not talking only about “organisation of religion”, we are talking about a fundamental right which is one of the most essential factors making up the identity of believers and their views on life. Without this right in place, other rights would lose their impetus

and force from the perspective of EU believers and non-believers as they would not be able to be manifested through those rights either. We abide by the European Convention of Human Rights. We abide by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which recognizes, of course, freedom of religion as one of the fundamental rights, but also the non-discrimination principle, including based on religion or belief, which is a basis for all EU legislation. We have created guidelines for the protection

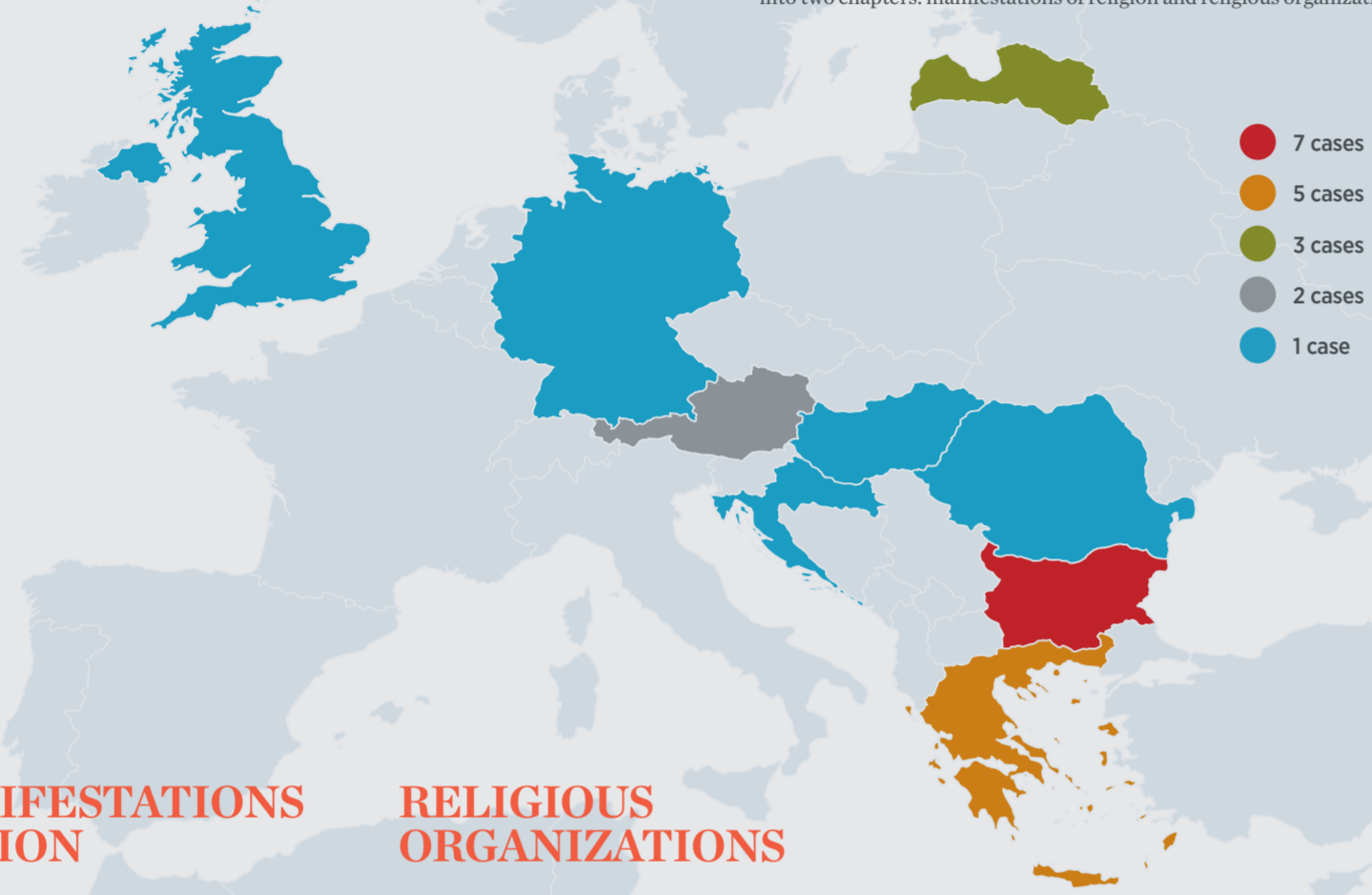
and promotion of freedom of religion or belief. We criticize others, often with good reasons, and we have started to be active in that field in regard to EU diplomacy. Now we need to ensure freedom of religion or belief in the EU member states, in and emanating from European Union institutions. We need to uphold and defend the freedom of conscience and religion of all individuals by rejecting and speaking out against bigotry, discrimination, harassment and violence. This is the reason for the Faith and Freedom Summit

campaign that we launched ahead of the next European Parliament Election of May this year. Anyone joining the campaign will prove that, the right to freedom of religion or belief, and the right to not being discriminated on the basis of anyone's religion or belief, will be defended vigorously, as never before. The articles you will find in this section have been written by renowned specialists, and will give you so many reasons to support the campaign, that we hope you will join, whoever you are, whatever your political beliefs. ■



VIOLATIONS OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN THE EU RECOGNIZED by the ECHR

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which binds the 47 member-states of the Council of Europe including the 28 members of the European Union ("the EU"). It is only in the last twenty years that the European Court of Human Rights ("the ECHR") has been seized of applications alleging a violation of Article 9, taken alone or in combination with other articles of the Convention or its additional protocols. Most are declared inadmissible for various reasons. The infringement judgments delivered by the ECHR mainly concern non-EU states, in particular Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Turkey. Some, though few, target EU members. They can be grouped into two chapters: manifestations of religion and religious organizations.



THE MANIFESTATIONS OF RELIGION

PROSELYTISM

Convictions to prison sentences for proselytism (Kokkinakis v. Greece, 25 May 1993, and Larissis and Others v. Greece, 24 February 1998).

DENOMINATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Decision of the State to "requalify" the membership of members of the Old Orthodox religion, leading ipso facto to a change of denomination (Mirojubovs and others v. Latvia, 15 September 2009).

Dismissal of an employee of a public school for belonging to an evangelical community (Ivanova v. Bulgaria, April 12, 2007).

Obligation for a new lawyer and for individuals participating in criminal proceedings as witnesses, complainants or suspects to take the religious oath (Alexandridis v. Greece, 21 February 2008, Dimitras and Others v. Greece, 3 June 2010, and Dimitras and others v. Greece (No. 3), 8 January 2013).

PORT OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

Temporary dismissal of an employee of a private company for refusing to conceal the Christian cross she bore (Eweida and Others v. The United Kingdom, January 15, 2013).

FOOD PRECEPTS

Refusal of the Prison Service to provide Buddhist detainees with meatless meals (Vartic v. Romania (2), 17 December 2013).

OBJECTION OF CONSCIENCE

Denial of access to the profession of accountant for conscientious objector convicted of refusing to wear uniform (Thlimmenos v. Greece, 6 April 2000).

Impossibility for Jehovah's Witnesses ministers to obtain a complete exemption from military service and alternative civilian service, for lack of being ministers of a "recognized religious society" (Löffelmann v. Austria and Gütl v. Austria, March 12, 2009, and Lang v. Austria, March 19, 2009).

THIRD PARTY ATTACKS

Insufficient police response to violent but regular protests by political party activists against Muslim-held Friday prayer meeting inside and outside a mosque (Karaahmed Bulgaria, 24 February 2015).

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

REGISTRATION OF ORGANIZATIONS

Prolonged refusal to recognize the legal personality of a religious community, which had a long history internationally and was already known at the national level (Religionsgemeinschaft der Zeugen Jehovas and others v. Austria, 31 July 2008).

Refusal to conclude an agreement with Reformed churches to provide religious classes in public schools and to obtain official recognition of religious marriages (Savez crkava "Riječ života" and others v. Croatia, 9 December 2010).

STATE RELATIONS

Relegation to the status of "associations" of religious organizations previously recognized as "churches", resulting in the loss of rights and privileges (Magyar Keresztény Mennonita Egyház and others v. Hungary, 8 April 2014).

FINANCING ORGANIZATIONS

Taxation of all the donations received by religious associations, together with interest for late payment and surcharges (Association Jehovah's Witnesses v. France, June 30, 2011, and Evangelical Missionary Church and Salaün v. France, Religious Association of the Temple Pyramid v. France and Association of Knights of the Golden Lotus v. France, January 31, 2013).

Refusal to exonerate from the payment of inheritance and donation taxes a religious community having the simple status of a "registered religious organization" and not of a "recognized religious society" (Jehovas Zeugen in Österreich v. Austria, 25 September 2012).

CHOICE OF LEADERS

Government intervention in choosing the leaders of the Muslim community (Hassan and Tchaouch v. Bulgaria, 26 October 2000).

Organization by the government of a unifying conference of Muslims to end a schism and consequent selection of participants by the government (High Spiritual Council of the Muslim Community v. Bulgaria, December 16, 2004).

Government interference in a conflict tearing the National Orthodox Church, which it had directly helped to create by declaring invalid the election of the Patriarch Maxim as the head of the Church (Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Metropolitan Innocent) and others v. Bulgaria, 22 January 2009).

MINISTERS OF RELIGION

Conviction, for "usurpation of functions of minister of a known religion" and "public wearing of the dress of such a minister without having the right", to prison sentences commuted in fines of Muftis elected by Muslims but not recognized by the State which had appointed other persons to these posts (Serif v. Greece, 14 December 1999, and Agga v. Greece (no. 2), 17 October 2002, Agga v. Greece (no. 3) and (no. 4), July 13, 2006).

Prohibition of foreign missionaries from engaging in public religious activities (Perry v. Latvia, 8 November 2007).

PLACES OF WORSHIP OR PRAYER

Conviction of Jehovah's Witnesses to prison and fine for using a private room, rented as a House of Prayer, without prior authorization from the local bishop of the Orthodox Church and from the Minister of national education and religions (Manoussakis and others v. Greece, 26 September 1996).

Prohibition of the gathering of followers of a religious community in the home of one of them, on the grounds that it was not registered by the State (Boychev and Others v. Bulgaria, 27 January 2011).

Injunction imposed by the police on a member of an evangelical community against holding meetings at her home (Dimitrova v. Bulgaria, 10 February 2015).



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS



AN IDEOLOGICAL EXCHANGE



Martin Cox
Director, John Locke Institute, Oxford

The general trend of history leans towards globalism. Over time differences in our identities and interests come to matter less and our common causes matter more. But from time to time the current backs up, and we pay too much heed to what divides us. We live in such a time.

Economic nationalism and so-called protectionism are on the rise. Tribalism is on the rise too, as identity politics makes our disagreements personal, and fosters resentment and suspicion of people who do not share our background or our interests. Politics, by its nature, tends to focus our attention on our differences and we seem to be getting worse and worse at talking and listening to each other. So, in the spirit of rapprochement, I propose an exchange of ideas, inviting the right and the left to borrow the best from each other.

The left has always been concerned with inequality, not just its existence but especially the deep structural causes of it. For this reason they are critical of free market economics, and supportive of government intervention to redistribute income and wealth and to dismantle institutional obstacles that poorer, disenfranchised people face. The right are typically more favourable to markets, which they believe have enormous power to generate wealth for millions of people around the world. They fear that too much government regulation will strangle wealth creation, high taxes will blunt the incentives of innovators and risk takers, and a too-generous welfare state will create complacency and trap people in dependency.

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At a deeper level their disagreements are more visceral, and they are mostly about fairness. How is it fair, the left will argue, that two children born in the same country, on the same day, can start their lives with such different prospects? One might be rich and privileged, the other poor and vulnerable, through no merit or fault of their own.

At a deeper level their disagreements are more visceral, and they are mostly about fairness. How is it fair, the left will argue, that two children born in the same country, on the same day, can start their lives with such different prospects? One might be rich and privileged, the other poor and vulnerable, through no merit or fault of their own. Those on the right will ask how it is fair that somebody who studies hard, and then works long hours at the office, and saves and invests, should have the fruits of her labour snatched away to subsidise the lifestyle of idle strangers. The left will tell you that it's about time the fat cats paid their fair share of taxes. The right will answer that, in many countries, the richest one-fifth already pays more income tax than the other

four-fifths combined. If five people go out to dinner and one of them pays half the total bill, it is simply nonsense, they will say, to criticise him for not paying his fair share. But what would happen if each side listened, really listened, to the other? First, some people on the right would become more compassionate. They might try hard to imagine what life would be like under other, less fortunate, circumstances and squarely face the fact that life is just harder for some people. And they might notice, for the first time, the valuable privileges and opportunities that they have taken for granted. The left would begin to see the capitalist system not merely as the source of the problem, but also as the best hope for a solution. Yes, markets can

exacerbate inequality, but the problem of the poor is not how rich the rich are, but how poor the poor are. And the best solution to poverty the world has ever known is undoubtedly capitalism. Be careful if you try to improve it; you might kill it. The left would also take a fresh, sober look at the limitations of government, and its tendency to generate unintentional consequences, which so often make government solutions worse than the problems they are trying to fix.

Right now, we have the worst of both worlds. Many on the right are telling the poor to stop complaining and get a job. Many on the left are telling the poor that their poverty is not their own fault, and that the system is to blame. Neither message is much use to the poor and both are, in their own ways, deeply discouraging. The lives of our poorest citizens are precarious, and there really are institutional impediments that won't vanish by being ignored. But to be told that you are a helpless victim of implacable impersonal forces is an invitation to give up trying. Not all successful people were born rich, and not all of them possess rare talents. What they do nearly all seem to have is optimism and perseverance.

Abundant opportunities await those with enough self-belief to search for them. We should be compassionate. We should dismantle the obstacles that trap people in poverty (particularly when those obstacles are of the government's own making, as they often are). But we must not allow our compassion to stifle optimism, or perpetuate a narrative of social determinism. ■



WE ARE THE CORE OF A WIDER MOVEMENT TO UNITE ALL ITALIAN CONSERVATIVES

An Interview with Giorgia Meloni, Party Leader of the Brothers of Italy (FdI)

In an exclusive interview with *The Conservative*, Brothers of Italy leader Giorgia Meloni states her Party 'is the natural choice for millions of Italians, and will certainly be on the ballot in the European elections'. She calls on other parties and movements to join her.

THE CONSERVATIVE
Will the Brothers of Italy (FdI) be running in the European elections in May under your own name or in an alliance with other parties?

GIORGIA MELONI
My party, the Brothers of Italy, is the core of a wider movement to unite all Italian conservatives and all those that wish to maintain national sovereignty in Europe. Our party is the natural choice for millions of Italians, and it will certainly be on the ballot in the European elections on 26 May. We would, however, welcome other political movements join with us in this effort under our electoral symbol.

THE CONSERVATIVE
What is the fundamental objective of the Brothers of Italy in the European Elections?

GIORGIA MELONI
Our aim is to return to Brussels with a larger and combative group and to strengthen the array of those parties that wish to preserve the national

sovereignty of their member states. We will work with all the conservative groups to bridge the divide between the EPP center-right parties and the populists, thereby relegating the left and Macron to the sidelines of European politics. We are also confident that this election will demonstrate that we soon will be the natural second party of the center-right coalition in Italy, with Lega.

THE CONSERVATIVE
Why did your party join the European Conservative and Reformist Group (ECR Group) in the European Parliament?

GIORGIA MELONI
After Brexit, the ECR Group will be led by the conservative Polish governing party PiS. PiS is the most important governing party in the Visegrad Group, and the natural example to emulate for those who wish to preserve national sovereignty and stand up inside the European Union. Furthermore, it is a natural political alliance for us, since our political predecessors in the

Allianza Nazionale were affiliated with iPiS prior to 2009. We also hope that the Hungarian governing party Fidesz, Orbán's party, will join this group after the elections. We also believe we could play a role strengthening the voice of the Mediterranean countries in the ECR group; a group which already counts as its members important personalities such as Raffaele Fitto, Remo Semagiotto, Stefano Maullu and Innocenzo Leontini.

THE CONSERVATIVE
What distinguishes the Brothers of Italy from Salvini and Le Pen?

GIORGIA MELONI
The fundamental difference is that we have the courage to propose an alternative model. We don't believe it is enough to say "no" to this European Union. We want to realize a confederation of free and sovereign nations that coordinate their policies on major issues such as immigration, security and the internal market, but remain free to choose their own path in other areas without interference from European bureaucrats.

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THE CONSERVATIVE
Forza Italia chose to join the European Peoples Party (EPP Group) and the Brothers of Italy chose to join the ECR Group. Does that complicate the relationship between your parties?

GIORGIA MELONI
Forza Italia has always had a different position from us on the issue of sovereignty of Member States in Europe. For far too long they have voted alongside Angela Merkel. For this reason, already in the last part of the 2009-2014 mandate, our members abandoned the EPP

Group. We hope that after the elections, Forza Italia – and, indeed, the entire EPP – will abandon this deadly embrace with the Left, and choose to take a road that will bring them closer to us and Mr Orbán's party.

THE CONSERVATIVE
In Italy, Lega now governs with the Five-Star Movement (M5S). Is this a positive development?

GIORGIA MELONI
The Five Star Movement is on the left on all the major issues of our time. On



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Over the past years national sovereignty has gradually been eroded and has now been largely lost. The core of what used to be viewed as the natural sovereignty of a nation has been devolved. Political sovereignty has been taken over by European bureaucracies and the markets. Economic sovereignty has also been weakened by uncontrolled globalization and the power of large foreign multinationals that shop around for the best regulatory conditions.

immigration, core values of our civilization and the relationship with EU, the Five Star Movement are in agreement with the leftist parties. Moreover, few months ago they tried to join ALDE, the European party of Mario Monti, and in the plenary the Five Star Movement usually votes alongside the Left. It is inevitable that the underlying political conflict in the Italian government will surface and cause a crisis. Until then the Brothers of Italy will continue their patriotic opposition, supporting the measures that we consider positive for Italian people and opposing the worst ones.

THE CONSERVATIVE
Will this government end in a crisis over the relationship with EU?

GIORGIA MELONI
The Italian government will collapse when a credible alternative emerges. We are committed to building this alternative. We are working alongside the Lega Party, and with all Conservatives, and those seeking sovereignty for the nation states, to create a credible national governing party. We want to renew the Center-right, save Salvini from the deadly embrace of the Five-Stars Movement and bring back a real conservative government.

THE CONSERVATIVE
In your opinion, in this crisis of the nation state, how much sovereignty remains and what responsibility do the parties have for the situation?

GIORGIA MELONI
Over the past years national sovereignty has gradually been eroded and has now been largely lost. The core of what used to be viewed as the

natural sovereignty of a nation has been devolved. Political sovereignty has been taken over by European bureaucracies and the markets. Economic sovereignty has also been weakened by uncontrolled globalization and the power of large foreign multinationals that shop around for the best regulatory conditions.

The political parties, especially the parties that are heirs of the Left will have to bare the historical responsibility of having encouraged the process of centralizing sovereignty to the European Union. They have turned Europeanism and globalism into offshoots of old internationalism. The Left has also replaced its traditional defense of workers, with organizing minorities, immigrants and the LGBT lobbies. But the Center-right establishment also has its share and responsibility for this process. I am convinced that the European establishment in November 2011 toppled the last legitimately elected government in Italy. The European establishment took this action precisely because that government was trying to recover some of the sovereignty our nation has lost.

THE CONSERVATIVE
What is your opinion on the UN agreement called Global Compact for Migration?

GIORGIA MELONI
This Compact is a dangerous madness. There cannot be a "universal right to migration" that exists regardless of whether the person is a real refugee, a legal or an illegal migrant.



These are different situations. Yet, the Compact affirms such a universal right. This will create a precedent that will allow the many NGOs that benefit from the business of migration to appeal court judgments and push for further uncontrolled immigration. It is for this reason that nations that defend their borders, for example, the USA, Hungary, Poland, and Austria, have decided not to sign.

In light of this I cannot understand, nor I can accept, the position of the Italian Government. If we add the votes of the Democratic Party (PD) to those of the Five Star Movement we know now that the Global Compact will be approved, and Italy will be obliged to sign. Here, Lega seems to be under the thumb of the Five Star Movement and the Left. They have yet to explain what the purpose of closing the ports and limiting humanitarian protection if, with one signature, we are condemned to suffer an invasion.

It is a risk that I do not think we can accept. To end illegal migration, there is only one solution for Brothers of Italy: a European and international mission for a naval blockade off the coast of Libya in combination with refugee processing centers in Africa that examine asylum applications and distribute the real refugees fairly among all the Member States of the European Union. We must prevent the boats from leaving, and this is one of the fights we will carry to the next European Parliament. ■



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A SEA OF TROUBLE IN EUROPE

An Interview with Ryszard Legutko by Kai Weiss

Kai Weiss is a research fellow at the Austrian Economics Center and a board member of the Hayek Institute, both in Vienna.

The interview was originally published at *The European Conservative*, Issue 15.

Ryszard Legutko is a Member of the European Parliament, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Co-Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of European Conservatives and Reformists. He is also a professor of philosophy at Jagellonian University in Krakow, Poland. He has served as Minister of Education, Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the late President Lech Kaczynski, and Deputy Speaker of the Senate. His most recent English language book is *The Demon in Democracy: Totalitarian Temptations in Free Societies* (Encounter Books, 2016).

KAI WEISS
You fought against Communism, and when the Soviet Union fell, there was a lot of hope with liberal democracy coming into Eastern Europe. But, as you explain in your latest book, you soon realized that it was not actually that different from the previous system. Could you explain how it has become surprisingly similar?

seriousness in talking about important issues. And it wasn't the case. Of course, I didn't see it clearly at the very beginning.

It is difficult to see things as they are because there are lots of prejudices and judgements through which you see things. But at a certain moment in my life I was starting to think: "There is no plurality." There is a monopoly, and there is one point of view that has a monopoly. And there is this mendaciousity of language. There are many people who use words such as 'plurality', 'tolerance', 'democracy'. They are the most autocratic. So I thought: "Maybe there's something wrong with it." So I came to this notion that there is a certain similarity which goes back to some ideas in early modernity.

Both liberal democracy and Communism tend to politicize the entire society. You have to be political. There is no space, no area, no family, no religion which is discrete from politics. Everything had to be communist — and now, everything has to be liberal democratic.

KAI WEISS
In which specific way are you using the term liberal democracy? Is it the politically correct, social justice culture, or are there already problems in libertarian, classical liberal thoughts?

RYSZARD LEGUTKO
My point is that it's not just political correctness. See, political correctness is the consequence of a long process, and it's a legitimate consequence. It's not like, "Let's get rid of political correctness" and then we will have the

world or the system as it should be, with open space and a serious discourse of opinions. My argument, which I put forward in the book, is that from the very beginning liberalism was a very restrictive, authoritarian theory.

The word 'liberalism' comes from 'liberty', so etymologically people tend to think that whoever is liberal must be for liberty. No, whoever is liberal is supportive of a certain theory which is called 'liberalism'. This is an entirely different thing. Now, what I object to in liberalism — and it starts with John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and John Stuart Mill — is that from the very beginning liberalism was conceived as a theory which considers itself to be superior to all others. That is: "We are better than you are, so we will organize a life for you where each of you will have an equal amount of liberty."

This promise may or may not be true, but by the very idea, liberals position themselves above all other orientations. They say, for example: "You conservatives are one-sided, you Christians represent one particular religion. We liberals, we represent everybody. And since we represent everybody, we will take control in terms of ideology, in terms of politics." In fact, they become monopolists.

About three to five decades ago, when you looked at political theory, there were several political orientations, both in the real world and in the academic world. Now it's all gone. There is liberalism. It is a monopoly. Liberalism is, in fact, the only legitimate philosophy out there. If you are not a liberal, then what are you? Either a fascist or simply crazy — because

every rational, well-educated person has to be a liberal.

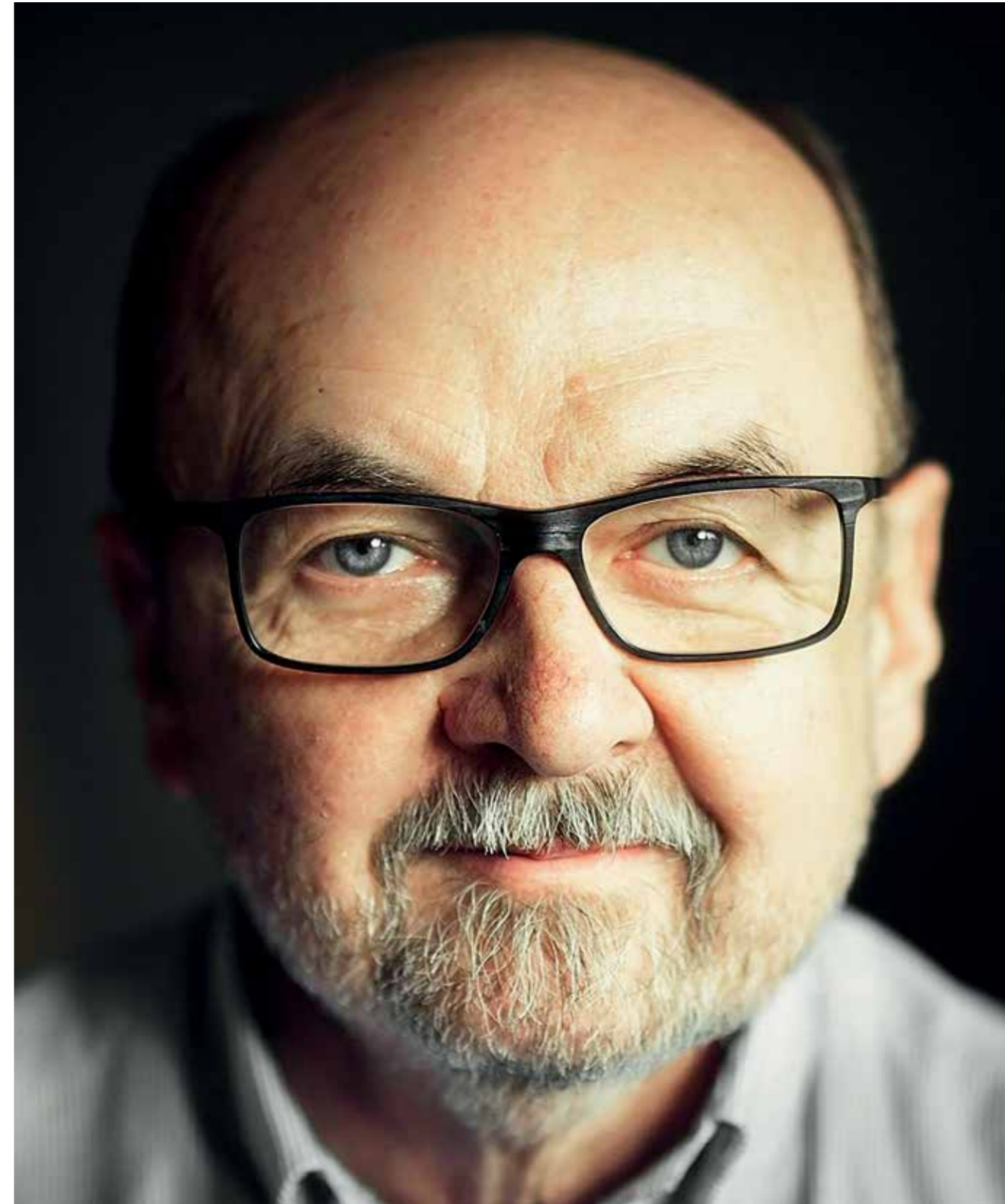
Now, when it comes to democracy, some people somehow think democracy is a system of freedom, a system that is 'open'. Well, that's not the case. It was the ancient democracy that was very autocratic. But what was eye-opening to me was reading Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. The first part of the book is almost entirely enthusiastic about American society because there are so many NGOs — what he called associations, civic organizations. He loves that and is very much impressed by it — and quite rightly.

However, the closer you get to the end of Tocqueville's book, you see that he is very much concerned. He sees that there is a tendency in democracies to homogenize. Democracy is not about plurality. Democracy is about

homogeneity, the rule of the majority. And one of the sentences from *Democracy in America* that I quote in my book is: "I know of no other country in the world in which there is less freedom of thought." We have been living under the spell of a word — that 'democracy' is a good thing. But look at how it works: look at the institution in which I work, the European Parliament. This is a typical majoritarian institution, where the power is in the hand of the majority which has the monopoly — and whoever does not belong to the majority and does not conform to mainstream politics is marginalized.

More and more people are trying to convince us that liberal democracy is a perfect invention. It isn't. There are a lot of dangerous consequences, and we have to be aware of those consequences, and try to either improve — or eliminate — them.

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We have to be very critical. The word 'critique' or 'critical' has become one of those favourite notions of modern discourse, but this is also mendacious language. There is the typical politician, and he is not critical at all because he's not criticizing anything. He's an apologist of the system.”



We have to be very critical. The word 'critique' or 'critical' has become one of those favourite notions of modern discourse, but this is also mendacious language. There is the typical politician, and he is not critical at all because he's not criticizing anything. He's an apologist of the system.

Going back to your question: No, it's not just the recent developments in liberal democracy. Of course, the recent developments in liberal democracy are particularly acute, that's why we can see them. But Tocqueville saw it almost two hundred years ago — and then John Stuart Mill saw it 150 years ago. It has been there, at various degrees of intensity, but it's one of the problems of our times. The same civilization that produced Marxism and Communism also produced liberalism and liberal democracy.

KAI WEISS
But aren't those liberal values such as freedom of speech, natural rights, and human dignity — often derived from Christianity — in and of themselves still correct, and have simply been abused?

RYSZARD LEGUTKO
Natural right is a very bizarre concept — the whole idea of a state-of-nature, which you can find in Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, too, even though he was no liberal himself. This is a very strange notion. It is a purely fictitious picture of human beings living in a very strange place. This is a pure theoretical construction. You cannot say that it is natural. It is artificial. It's a world of fiction. It's a creation of human imagination. There is nothing really natural about a Hobbesian or Lockean state of nature. You cannot defend freedom on the argument that in the state of

nature we were all free, because at the same time you can envisage a different picture of society, where you say in the state of nature we were all deprived of freedom, we were all in shackles. Freedom is to be defended on different grounds. If we look at Thomas Hobbes, he had this notion of the state of nature in which all people were equal, people were free, but at the same time everybody was endangered. Then, in order to reduce this danger and increase security, you had to build a big bureaucratic state, for the creation of which you had to give up your freedom. The Hobbesian people aren't really free people. If you look at Locke, his society is also a society ruled by a majoritarian government, so it's not a very free society either. I don't really believe that if you cherish freedom, you have to use the arguments of John Locke. Edmund Burke was a better defender of freedom, he is more persuasive. Or you have Hegel, who was a better defender of freedom than Thomas Hobbes. For some reasons, liberals reserve for themselves this role of the defenders of freedom.

KAI WEISS
Does liberal democracy in general lead to these 'totalitarian temptations' or can some parts be sustainably retained?

RYSZARD LEGUTKO
There is no inevitability. Of course, you can change the system. My idea was that a better solution is a kind of mixed regime, a mixed constitution system. Believe me, the final months of Communism, and the first months of liberal democracy, was the period when we had the greatest freedom. Before it was bad, and afterwards things have become worse and worse. I believe we

can somehow change the system, we can somehow reform it if we diagnose the problems and influences.

Certainly, the system that we live in has become very constraining. There are fewer and fewer things you can do, there are fewer and fewer things that you can say, or that you can publish. This is ridiculous. Even private life and family life have been permeated by politics. Once you have made this diagnosis, you see that things are going wrong. We are more and more trapped by this politics and by this ideology, but I can see a possibility that we can change the system.



The president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, seated next to Ryszard Legutko and Geoffrey Van Orden, during a meeting with members of the European Conservatives and Reformists parliamentary grouping

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The system that we live in has become very constraining. There are fewer and fewer things you can do, there are fewer and fewer things that you can say, or that you can publish.”

KAI WEISS
When it comes to changing the system, do you have any concrete solution at hand? Is it perhaps to strengthen civil society and the intermediary institutions again?

RYSZARD LEGUTKO
I long ago gave up on the intermediary NGOs. Just two hours ago, I was at a conference where a special fund for giving money to NGOs that are supportive of liberal democracy was discussed. That kills the entire concept of The European Conservative 11 non-governmental institutions. They are governmental institutions and they are subsidized by the European Commission, which is a kind of government. I appreciate all civic initiatives; I take part in several of them myself. But let us forget about those myths. Most NGOs, and especially the most powerful ones, have been subsidized by international organizations, indirectly by the government or the European Commission, and they are part of this system.

When it comes to a concrete solution, look at my country. My country has been treated viciously by the international community, but this is a country which has in many ways preserved a kind of plurality. There are things you can say and do in my country which you cannot do here [in Brussels]. There has to be some kind of institutional plurality, and the thing to do is to break the monopoly of the mainstream. My concern is that conservatives have capitulated in most European countries and even in the United States. Of course, there have been some movements in the opposite direction, which is good. But my overall perception is still that many have capitulated. Even the Catholic Church seems to have a tendency to capitulate. "But once we become part of the mainstream, maybe things will get better", they say. No! It's the other way around. Make the society genuinely plural. There are liberals, there are libertarians, there are all sorts of people, but there are also conservatives. They are not painted, beautified liberals; they are conservative. Maybe they are Catholics — they are not 'open' Catholics. I don't want the Catholics to be open as long as I do not see the liberals open. I haven't met an open liberal in my entire life. They are so damn closed.

KAI WEISS
Well, that's one negative ending...

RYSZARD LEGUTKO
That's a negative ending — but things could get better, though probably not at the next elections. But who knows? For many years, I was living in a system, and everybody was telling me that Communism was inevitable and that it would win, that it would conquer the entire world. Well, it didn't. History always has some surprises for us. ■

KAI WEISS
Since we are sitting here in the European Parliament, part of probably the most liberal democratic project in the postwar era, what do you see as the future of the European Union?

RYSZARD LEGUTKO
I speak from a position of a representative of a medium-size country, from the eastern part of Europe, the majority of whose population has supported the European Union. I see some value in institutionalized cooperation. But things have gone wrong. Today, the union is in conflict with what the Polish society really wants. This creates a tension. People in both Eastern and Western Europe are dissatisfied, and the answer from the EU is always 'more of the same'. If that continues, the EU will be in trouble. For me, it is a very saddening experience in the European Parliament. I'm trying to make a difference by international organizations, indirectly by the government or the European Commission, and they are part of this system.

The whole idea of democracy is that there is a pendulum, that the government can change its position. One party is in power one term, but with each swing of the pendulum, another comes in. But not here! This is the same coalition. It's like the infamous Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI] which was in power for over 70 years. When the same group of people is in power for such a long time, it has to become pathological because they are no longer used to the idea that they may lose. If you look at national politics [in Poland], one always has the feeling that in the next election, one can be 'sent packing', that one could be in the opposition. Not here [in Brussels]! This is hubris. If the EU doesn't change, it will sink deeper and deeper into a sea of trouble.



Athwart history, yelling:



William F Buckley Jr.

“I’d rather be governed by the first 2,000 names in the Boston telephone directory than by the 2,000 people on the faculty of Harvard University.”

Is that the statement of a populist? It is one of the most famous sayings of William F Buckley Jr (1925-2008), doyen of American conservatism, the man who did as much as anyone to make conservatism intellectually and (just as important) socially respectable in the United States. Buckley, especially in his early years, could be a ferocious polemicist. But the Bach-loving, harpsichord-playing, yacht-skipping, Gstaad-skiing, polysyllabic writer and editor was too urbane and too verbally nimble to be dismissed as another troglodytic tobacco-chewing throwback. (For one thing, Bill took his tobacco in elegant little cigarillos.)

How could such a man prefer a promiscuous sampling of the census rolls to the educated tony-ness of Harvard? Maybe he was just joshing, pulling your leg with a wink and a nod.

Alas, no. Not only did Buckley repeat that declaration on many occasions, he also often elaborated on it. “I rejoice in the influence of the people over their elected leaders,” he said on one occasion, “since I think that they show more wisdom than their leaders or their intellectuals.”

I never heard Bill Buckley opine about “populism” *per se*, but I often heard him discourse about the virtues of liberty and the political, social, and moral liabilities of the Left-liberal consensus; ie, Harvard for short.

I am morally certain that Bill Buckley would have supported Brexit – Brussels, after all, is a sort of super-Harvard, at least in its smugness, lack of accountability, and sense of entitlement. What he would have thought about the candidacy of Donald Trump is more difficult to discern. The one column that I

am aware he wrote about Trump was highly critical, but it was written years ago and took no cognisance of the fundamental datum of the 2016 Presidential election: that it came down to a choice between Hillary Clinton, whom Bill held in contempt, and Donald Trump.

I suspect that Bill would have invoked (another famous WFB-ism) The Buckley Doctrine, usually formulated as the idea that conservatives ought to rally around the most conservative candidate who is also electable.

As Buckley’s friend and colleague Neal Freeman has demonstrated, however – and Freeman was there when the principle was first uttered – the usual formulation is not the accurate formulation. Freeman went back to 1964 when the choice in the Republican primary was between Nelson Rockefeller, the Republican establishment’s darling, and Barry Goldwater, the impossible (may I say “populist”?) firebrand. Whom should *National Review* endorse? The debate raged for some time in the *sancta sanctorum* of NR’s editorial offices, some editors arguing one side, some the other. In the fullness of time, the dictum came down from WFB himself: *National Review* would support “the Rightwardmost viable candidate” – ie, Goldwater, unelectable in 1964 but viable in the sense of representing a robust and coherent conservative vision of the world.

It was the same in the 1965 New York mayoral race, whose chief entertainment was the candidacy of Bill Buckley himself. Bill hadn’t a chance of winning. Indeed, when asked what he would do if he were to win, he famously replied: “Demand a recount.” But Bill’s candidacy was *viable* because it enabled him to put before the public an articulate case for various important conservative ideas.

The underlying point is that powerful ideas can have powerful consequences. Goldwater didn’t stand a chance of winning in 1964, but his candidacy was part of the galvanising force that ushered Ronald Reagan into the White House 15 years later.

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Bill’s mayoral race didn’t see him into Gracie Mansion, the mayor’s official residence, but it was one of the propaedeutic elements that helped see his brother Jim into the US Senate a few years down the road. Can something similar be said about Donald Trump? I think so, but I appreciate that opinions on that score vary sharply.

Let me therefore move on to a Buckleyism even more famous than his *let me about* the advantages of the Boston phone book compared to the faculty of Harvard. I mean Bill’s declaration of war against the Left-liberal

consensus in 1955 in the inaugural issue of *National Review*. Bill noted that the new magazine would be out of place “in the sense that the United Nations and the League of Women Voters and the *New York Times* and Henry Steele Commager are in place”. It is out of place, he said, because, in its maturity, “literate America rejected conservatism in favour of radical social experimentation”. The brash new magazine had arrived with its brash young editor to cast a cold and inquisitive light upon that presumption. *National Review* “stands athwart history,” Bill announced, “yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it.”

Although written more than 60 years ago, that statement of purpose has a preternaturally contemporary relevance. Bill warned about “Radical social experimentation”; “the inroads that relativism has made on the American soul”; “the intransigence of the Liberals, who run this country.” If those yelling “Stop!” in 1955 were “out of place,” how much more out of place now, in 2017, when what Bill called “the relationship of the state to the individual” has

become one of the most fraught questions now facing Western polities?

Ideas, Bill observed in that editorial, “rule the world.” What ideas? Liberty for one. The United States was “conceived in liberty,” as Lincoln put it. The idea of individual freedom and its guarantor, limited government, were the country’s *cynosure*, its guiding principle. By 1955, that principle had been insidiously undermined by the well-intentioned dispensations of “literate America,” intoxicated as it was by “radical social experimentation.” Think of it: in 1955, Bill Buckley, not yet



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30, argued that “There never was an age of conformity quite like this one.” And today? Looking back, we understand that the dampening spirit of conformity and the assault on freedom were then in their infancy. They have suddenly come of age. The question is not whether Bill’s inaugural bulletin is still pertinent. It could hardly be more so. The question is whether those “uncorrupted by a cynical contempt for human freedom” will command the wit, rhetoric, and moral courage to stand athwart tomorrow whispering, confiding, explaining – sometimes even yelling “Stop!” – in order that freedom might have an opportunity to prevail.

In one of his earliest essays, from 1951, Bill wrote about Friedrich von Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom* (itself only seven or eight years old) and limned two critical dangers facing liberty: the external threat of Communist imperialism and the homegrown threat of “government paternalism.” The fall of the Soviet colossus signaled not the end but the dissipation of the former threat, its distribution over a more amorphous field of action. The threat of government paternalism is today more patent than ever. Indeed, read- ing through Bill’s essays, I am often brought up short by a sense of historical foreshortening: Bill was writing



In each issue Roger Kimball features a past conservative hero about whom we should all know more.



in 1957 or 1967 or 1977, but his essays read as if they were written yesterday, or possibly this morning. Environmentalism. The oil crisis. The Religious Right. States’ rights. Reforming health care. Immigration, illegal and the other kind. The future of Social Security. Israel. Irresponsible accusations of racism. The Supreme Court. Iran and the bomb. The substance as well as the subject might have been taken from what is happening now, today.

In part, no doubt, the contemporaneous feel of so much that Bill wrote is explained by a passage from *Ecclesiastes*: “There is nothing new under the sun.” But there was also Bill’s unerring instinct for the pertinent. When he wrote about a matter of public interest, he went for, and generally hit upon, the jugular. I do not mean only that he deployed the successful debater’s trick of touching on spots that were sore or weak. Bill was an able debater, and was plenty adept at ferreting out and exposing his opponents’ weaknesses, evasions, ambiguities, enthymemes, and unwarranted presumptions. But he also had a conspicuous talent for getting to the heart of a matter. And so whether his subject was environmentalism, school choice, race relations, religious observances, foreign policy, or encroaching statism, what he wrote was likely to touch upon what was central and enduring. That is one of the benefits of conservatism: embracing the permanent, one may be unfashionable, but one is never out of date. Literature, said Ezra Pound, is news that stays news. I have met few people better informed about public affairs than Bill Buckley. But his mastery of the day’s ephemera was only a prelude to his embrace of the principles that underlay the controversies.

Like Athena, Bill seems to have sprung forth fully armed. He was barely graduated from Yale College when he published *God and Man at Yale*. The book catapulted its 20-something author to an atmosphere of hostile notoriety from which, despite Bill’s

later acceptance by the world of high society, he never completely descended. It is difficult at this distance to recreate the stir – no, the tornado – that book precipitated. American readers may recall the apoplexy that greeted Allan Bloom’s book *The Closing of the American Mind* in the late-1980s. My, how the Left-wing academic establishment loved to hate that book! Double that enmity, treble it: that will give you some sense of the hostility that engulfed *God and Man at Yale*. Bill’s opening credo that “the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world” was simply not to be borne. His codicil – “I further believe that the struggle between individualism [ie, conservatism] and collectivism is the same struggle reproduced on another level” – elevated disbelief into rage. The liberal establishment, Dwight Macdonald observed at the time, “reacted with all of the grace and agility of an elephant cornered by a mouse.” McGeorge Bundy pronounced anathema upon the book in *The Atlantic Monthly*. The (then) well-known Yale philosopher TM Greene deployed the word “fascist” three times in as many sentences. “What more,” Professor Greene asked, “could Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin ask for?” Well, as Bill observed in his response, “they asked for, and got, a great deal more.”

In retrospect, the reaction to *Gamag* (as the book was nicknamed after the Beaujolais-minded publisher) is partly amusing, partly frightening. The amusing part arises from the elephant-corned-by-mouse aspect Dwight

Macdonald mentioned. The frightening part comes when you realise how contemporary Bill’s travails seem. Professor Greene went on to pontificate that:

“What is required is more not less tolerance – not the tolerance of indifference, but the tolerance of honest respect for divergent convictions and the determination of all that such divergent opinions be heard without administrative censorship. I try my best in the classroom to expound and defend my faith, when it is relevant, as honestly and persuasively

as I can. But I can do so only because many of my colleagues are expounding and defending their contrasting faiths, or skepticism, as openly and honestly as I am mine.

Sound familiar? But this, Bill rightly noted, is “*ne plus ultra* relativism, idiot nihilism.” No ethical code requires “honest respect” for every divergent opinion. “Eating people is wrong,” as Flanders and Swann put it, and you needn’t be Aristotle to extend the list of things unworthy of toleration

no matter what a “divergent opinion” might dictate. “Complete moral tolerance,” as James Fitzjames Stephen noted in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873), “is possible only when men have become completely indifferent to each other – that is to say, when society is at an end.” Besides, Professor Greene’s aria about tolerance would have been sweeter – or at least ostensibly more plausible – had he deigned to practice what he preached. “An honest respect by him for my divergent conviction,” Bill wrote, “would have been an arresting

application at once of his theoretical and his charitable convictions.”

The nerve that Bill struck with *God and Man at Yale* is still smarting; indeed, it is throbbing uncontrollably, as anyone can attest who has contemplated the discrepancy between proclamations of “diversity” on campuses in Western academia and the practice there of enforcing a politically correct orthodoxy on any contentious subject. The bottom line: there is plenty of room for “diversity,” so long as you embrace the Left-liberal dogma.

Diverge from that dogma and you will quickly find that the rhetoric of diversity has been replaced by talk of “prejudice,” “hate speech,” and the entire lexicon of Left-liberal denunciation. Every life can be characterised by one or two governing attitudes. Perhaps the word that best characterised Bill was “relish.” The depth and variousness of Bill Buckley’s many avocations reflect the depth and variousness of his attitudes. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wasn’t wrong about everything, devoted a book to Representative Men, men who epitomised some essential quality: Shakespeare; or, the Poet; Napoleon; or, the Man of the World; Goethe; or, the Writer. Bill Buckley is, in Emerson’s sense, a Representative Man. One cannot quite imagine Emerson getting his mind around a character like William F Buckley Jr. But if one can conjure up a less gaseous reduction of Emerson, one may suppose him writing an essay called Buckley; or, the Conservative.

I hasten to add that by “conservative” I do not mean any narrow partisan affiliation. Yes, yes, Bill was known above all as a conservative: the man who made American conservatism respectable again. That’s all very well, but unfortunately the term “conservative” (like its opposite number, “liberal”) has degenerated into an epithet, positive or negative depending on the communion of the person who wields it, but virtually without content. (In this respect, it is a lot like the word “populist.”)

Being conservative may commit one to certain political positions or moral dogmas. But it also, and perhaps more important, disposes one to a certain attitude toward life. Walter Bagehot touched upon one essential aspect of the conservative disposition when, in writing of an essay on Walter Scott, he observed that “the essence of Toryism is enjoyment.” Whatever else it was, Bill Buckley’s life was an affidavit of enjoyment: a record of, an homage to, a life greatly, and gratefully, enjoyed. ■



WHEN TO GO?



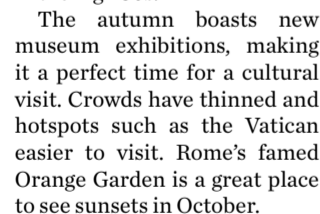
Rome is a great year-round destination, depending on what kind of climate suits you. There is always something on offer.

In spring, Rome is bursting with colour. The city's birthday is celebrated on 21st April, and festivities are held to mark the occasion. The bougainvillea throughout the city, notably by the Spanish Steps, are at their best in May. Spring in Rome offers free concerts at San Giovanni, too, and the Festa Della Donna.



During the summer, Rome becomes a tourist hotspot. It's a great time of year for Rome's outdoor events like the cinema in the piazza and evenings on rooftop bars. August in Rome is the hottest month, and celebrates Ferragosto, the feast of the assumption. The major attractions are cursed with long lines and the city reaches temperatures in the high 30s.

The autumn boasts new museum exhibitions, making it a perfect time for a cultural visit. Crowds have thinned and hotspots such as the Vatican are easier to visit. Rome's famed Orange Garden is a great place to see sunsets in October.



The winter months see cooler temperatures and rain, but even as late in the year as November you can happily go around with just a light jacket. Accommodation prices are much lower between October and April, making it a good time of year for a budget visit. In December the city takes on a festive feel, with many services in the Vatican. The city's most well-loved wine bars come into their own in winter, as a cosy retreat away from shoppers.

WHERE TO GO?



A natural choice for a visit to Rome is The Vatican City. This unique and remarkable place has its own gems. It offers St. Peter's Basilica, the famous Sistine Chapel and many museums. On Wednesdays, the Pope gives an address in the city, providing tourists with a memorable and singular experience.



For those with a passion for history, Palatine Hill is a must-see. Here, you can walk through the oldest parts of the city, parts of which date back to the 10th century B.C. It is within an easy walking distance of the Colosseum and the Roman Forum, making it a perfect spot for discovering the traditions, customs and history of Rome.

Known as a city of romance, Rome is a great place for couples. Forget the canals of Venice, and visit the Residenza di Ripetta, a hotel near the Spanish steps. Far-reaching views across Rome coupled with a beautiful garden and fine dining make for a magical evening.



WHERE TO STAY?



Depending on the time of year you visit, staying in Rome can be expensive. Luckily, there are lots of options available. Rome offers an abundance of AirBnB accommodations, hostels and hotels, guaranteed to suit everyone.

The luxury end of Rome has hotels right in the city's historic centre. Hotel Campo de' Fiori offer of rooms with private balconies that overlook the city, and stands out for its commitment to classical Roman architecture - in a move away from a typical boutique hotel, Campo de' Fiori has an ivy-covered front facade and rooms adorned with Pompeii-style furnishings, typifying Roman beauty.

For affordable places to stay, check out Hotel San Anselmo. Perfectly situated within walking distance of the Circus Maximus, this 4-star hotel offers rooms from £51. It offers a lavish downstairs lounge as a calm getaway from the bustle of the city. An event trendier stay can be found at Nerva boutique Hotel, a stay so abundant with charm it far exceeds the expectations of a 3-star hotel.

Rome is a great city for family holidays, and there lots of places which accommodate groups. Located near the Trevi fountain and the Colosseum, the Hotel Cosmopolita offers a central location and affordable stay. The hotel offers sightseeing tours and taxi services, making for a fulfilling and safe visit to the city.

WHAT TO DO?



Pyramid of Cestius
A 2,000 year old pyramid, this structure was built during the peak of the Roman Empire as a means of bringing Egyptian culture into their people's lives. It's a good way to avoid the crowds at other more popular attractions.



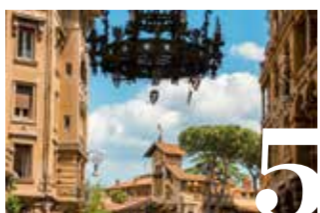
Take a Vespa tour by night
Become a true native for the evening and experience Rome on their famous Vespas! Find out more here: romeforyou.net/vespa-tour-rome.



Visit Santo Stefano Rotondo
The First Circular Church in Rome and one of the oldest in the world, the Santo Stefano dates back to the 5th century A.D. Visit their website santo-stefano-rotondo.it to find out more about opening hours and admission fees.



Gladiator school
Experience Rome back in the day with a session at gladiator school - a perfect activity for children!



Explore Quartiere Coppede
This is a neighbourhood of Rome little know by tourists. Here tourists can enjoy a mishmash of celebrated architectural periods, from Baroque to Ancient Greek to Art Nouveau.



See street art in Ostiense
If you aren't able to enjoy the colours of the flowers in May, another place to find such unique beauty is in Ostiense. Located in the south of the city, Ostiense boasts bold and colourful street art wall murals, and is the perfect spot for a riverside walk.



REMOVAL VIN



Moving house is stressful enough, and then comes the moment when the removal team begins packing your wine. Even with the best operation, something can easily go wrong. A prized bottle can slip out of the most experienced hands and fall to the floor. That means it is best not to watch as each one is removed, wrapped and then loaded into a box and shipped away for transportation.

A recent house move in London brought all this home. Mercifully, everything - all my odds and assortments - made it to the new house in one piece, but the nerve-racking experience prompted me to reflect on why we - those of us with the inclination - keep wine at all. What is it that we're looking for? Why not buy stuff as and when and drink it there and then when the occasion demands? After all, there is no shortage of wine in the shops, and in Britain an extraordinary range of wine from across Europe and the rest of the world is on offer.

On the continental mainland, in my experience, the situation is different. There, local shops and supermarkets outside the main cities offer primarily the fruits of what has been grown in that region. Even driving ten miles further north in the Rhone can make a major difference. The best place to buy Gigondas - my favourite in the region - is in Gigondas itself. Even in large supermarkets there is understandable regional pride and a determination to support growers long embedded in the local soil. Britain is different. It is a mongrel nation when it comes to wine, with a long tradition of importing. England has only recently begun to make serious inroads in wine production, and the volumes remain small. Gleeefully, British buyers scavenge from around the world - picking meaty Australia one minute, the hot red wines of Sicily the next, and then the cool Sauvignons of New Zealand. My mission continues to convince friends that New Zealand's new generation of up-scale chardonnays from Kumeu River rival, and sometimes outdo, the increasingly

over-priced whites from Burgundy. London wine fans are spoilt for choice. The UK capital city is particularly well-served with grand and not so grand wine merchants. Nationally, the Wine Society, owned by its members, provides an exemplary service, although too little, say critics, in the way of the eclectic and unusual. The supermarkets drive the bulk of consumption. Even so, with all that wine on tap with a regular trip to the shops, for some reason this is not enough and almost anyone who can afford to will look for a way to keep and age some wine. Which is how I came to be moving, or having moved for me, some of my favourite bottles awaiting the corkscrew. There are solutions



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“ There are others collecting wine who barely seem to drink or even like it. For them it is a status symbol, a means of showing off, the alcoholic equivalent of sports cars, cigars, and chasing sexual partners.

sufficient wine to require mass storage. Most of us do not have that problem. Enthusiastic amateurs - the category into which I fall - have special bottles and cases put aside in a cupboard. If you do this, make sure it is a cool and dark space and try to avoid using a cupboard under the stairs. Feet thumping on the stairs, time after time, day after day, can create just enough movement to unsettle the wine and spoil its development. Keeping too much at home brings other problems. A journalist colleague with a first-rank palette told me recently that he has bought so much that he now has an estimated 2,000 bottles stored in the cellar underneath his house. Supplies are so backed up, and space so tight, that he will have to drink his way through to access the oldest stuff. It will take years.

What an ordeal... What did I find of note in my move among the cases of Gigondas? A stray bottle of Taylor's port 1985, brought by a friend in Edinburgh to a dinner party in the mid2000s who said at the front door, "keep this, lay it down". Good advice. I can see him saying it now. Then a random bottle of good quality pink stuff from Provence, forgotten from the 2010 vintage. It will be vile now. There were some Champagne gems though, including a magnum of Pol Roger 1999 that will be over-the-hill but interesting, and a bottle of Pol Roger Winston Churchill from 1998 that will be perfect. I will open it to mark the publication of Andrew Robert's single-volume life of Churchill due later this year. Obviously, I will not open it at the book launch party, as one bottle will not go far and could cause a fight. Anyway, Andrew will have sourced Champagne by the case-load for his friends for that party.

Collecting wine saves money, it is said, because it can be bought young and drunk when it has matured, risen in price and can hardly be found, although I have never thought the process is much of a bargain. The fun and pleasure are what are foremost for most us, I suspect. In a small way, via sensation and the sparking of memories, good wine kept and opened years later brings the past to life and can make the future look brighter. Call it sentimentality, if you must. I prefer - as I have said in this column before - to think in Tory terms of Edmund Burke and the connection between the generations, with our obligation to the dead, the living and to those unborn or making their way in the world. One case of claret I had stored at the very back, and lifted especially carefully, was a Margaux from the superb 2009 vintage, a Marquis de Terme bought to keep and

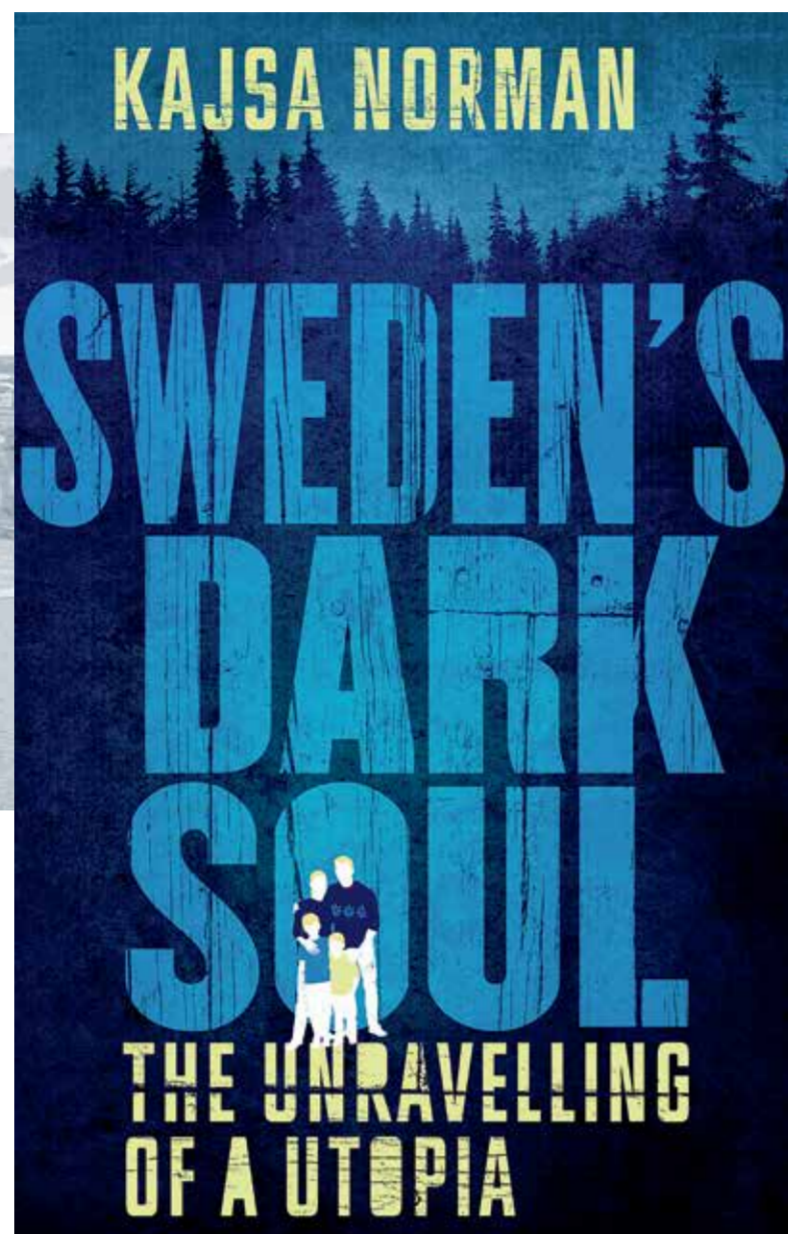


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Nonfiction SWEDISH SOUL SEARCHING

Sweden's Dark Soul - The Unravelling of a Utopia
by Kajsja Norman - C. Hurst (Publishers) Limited, 2018



Charlie Weimers
Candidate for the European Parliament,
Sweden Democrats

The Swedish establishment are emotionally invested in an identity based on the image of their country as a successful social-liberal post-national utopia. As this image becomes harder to maintain, the establishment need not only to confront the actual problems, but also, and more importantly, deal with the issue of who they are. If your Swedish identity is that of being part of a national utopian project, who are you if utopia unravels? This is the background to Kajsja Norman's book *Sweden's Dark Soul*.

Norman starts the book by depicting hundreds of sexual violations of teenage girls, and younger, during the festival, "We Are Stockholm" in the summer of 2015. Despite hundreds of witnesses and police reports, the media did not report on the crimes committed at the festival - which was funded by local government and situated only few hundred yards from Parliament and the royal castle. Norman interviews a psychologist who saw girls harassed and violated by groups of men. She describes how eyewitness tried to persuade Sweden's largest daily to cover the matter and how they fail.

The newspaper - Dagens Nyheter - has refused to acknowledge that their decision not to publish was due to the fact that all the perpetrators were

non-Swedish, but Norman makes a convincing case that this actually was the reason. Here, she puts her finger on a sore spot in a country that commends itself on being progressive on gender equality: Swedish feminists go into total paralysis when women's rights collide with immigration.

In the book's later chapters Norman usefully contrasts two people - the Swedish journalist Chang Frick and the Armenian immigrant Samvel. She suggests that only a character like Chang Frick, a natural outsider because of his Roma background, could find the courage to reveal the truth about the festival in his online newspaper, *Nyheter Idag*. Further, she shows why courage is required, in a country with the world's oldest free press, by describing how mainstream media tried to maintain and defend the unraveling utopian consensus by discrediting Chang Frick with accusations of peddling "fake news."

The Armenian immigrant Samvel, an albino called "the Dane" during childhood in Yerevan, is the second person described in the book. Norman touchingly illustrates one man's strong yearning to assimilate and acquire everything Swedish. She contrasts this yearning with the lukewarm response of the country's officialdom that replaced the policy of assimilation with multiculturalism back in 1975.

“ Swedish feminists go into total paralysis when women's rights collide with immigration.

Norman's use of life stories as a literary tool provides a thought-provoking portrayal that she weaves skillfully into the overarching historical context. The book gives a deeper understanding of why the political establishment and Swedish officials act as they do. The narrative of the book comes to life in a particularly surreal manner when Norman herself admits that she probably would not have dared to

write the book, had she lived in Sweden and been dependent on a local context for her livelihood. To date her book has not been able to find a Swedish publisher, despite good reviews in British media and the first edition being sold out. The author will not be overly surprised: she did after all write the book in English hoping for it to be translated in to Swedish, not the other way around. ■

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- ACROSS
1. World soccer league, for short
5. Fess up (to)
10. Dame of comedy
14. Shoot-____ (gangster movie)
15. Richards of the Rolling Stones
16. Shark's offer
17. Made known
19. Gridiron kick
20. Guilty, in a way
21. Not clear
22. Weakens the consistency of
26. Put _____ in (meddle)
30. Sooner
34. Word on many stereos
35. Assents
36. Two-kind link
37. Spreads around
39. Feature of some locks
42. Bale stuff
43. _____ happy to!
47. Mediterranean island
48. Height
51. Abacus user
52. Appraiser
54. Orange Free State colonizers
57. Chinese fruits
62. One of Lyndon's daughters

- DOWN
1. Org. bringing relief
2. _____ your service!
3. Five, in Frankfurt
4. Samoan city
5. Kipling's pack leader
6. Lay waste to
7. Cambridge sch.
8. Suffix with krypton
9. Religious deg.
10. Rio Grande city
11. "The King of Queens" hubby
12. When repeated, Mork's TV sign-off
13. Initial poker stake
18. Rut
21. Part of VIN (abbr.)
23. Supplement, with "out"
25. Miami's st.
25. "All _____ of You" (Phantom of the Opera number)

- 26. "Steady _____ goes!"
27. Regarding birth
28. One way to order ham
29. "Yes, captain!"
31. Seemed gloomy
32. Suffer _____ worse than death
33. Consumer advocate
38. Perches
40. Card game with king high
41. Three ft.
44. Bite the dust
45. Serb. neighbor
46. Subjugate
49. Mixed
50. Mule's dad
53. Added lubrication to
54. Lesage hero Gil
55. Pained interjection
56. Outside: Prefix
58. USN rank
59. Deli offering
60. _____ the start (present from the beginning)
61. Eye ailment
63. Guitar closer
64. Kingston Trio hit of 1959
65. Cooking spray brand

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Riccardo Muti is one of the senior conductors of the world. For almost 50 years, he has worked at the highest levels: in London, Philadelphia, Milan, Vienna, and elsewhere. Today, he is the music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

On a recent tour with the orchestra, he stopped in New York, for two concerts at Carnegie Hall. I sat down with him to talk about music and about life.

Muti was born in 1941 in Naples (not Florida, although Naples, Florida, happens to be his very next stop). He grew up on the Adriatic coast, in the town of Molfetta. He was one of five brothers, whose father was a doctor. Each boy was expected to take up a profession. For example, "I was supposed to study law," says Muti.

But his father was also an opera-lover, and an amateur tenor. He required that his boys learn an instrument, because "he believed that music is an important element for every person," as Muti says. "Music helps people to be better. To become deeper in their thoughts. To be more refined inside."

At eight, Riccardo was given a violin. Then he studied the piano, which would be his main instrument. He studied at conservatories in Naples and Milan.

It was Nino Rota who convinced him that he could be a full-time musician. Today, Rota is best known as a film music composer - *La Strada*, *The Godfather* -

RICCARDO MUTI FINDING THE MUSIC BETWEEN THE NOTES

Is it still a privilege to conduct these works, after a lifetime on the podium? A great one, answers Muti. "You go more deeply into the score and you love it more. The horizon widens. Every piece, I restudy from the beginning. I start again and again and again, because 'The End' exists only in the movies."

He also acquires new copies of familiar scores, free of his previous markings. The late maestro Otto Klemperer did the same, says Muti. You want a virgin score, to look at music afresh. "Mozart said that music lies between the notes," Muti

“ You go more deeply into the score and you love it more. The horizon widens. Every piece, I restudy from the beginning. I start again and again and again, because 'The End' exists only in the movies.

but he was a musician of many parts. "He could play *Wozzeck* from memory," says Muti, referring to Alban Berg's modernist opera. But, in his own music, Rota "had the courage to express his own nature". He "did not try to be a 'contemporary' composer."

In addition to piano, Muti studied composition and, of course, conducting. His conducting teacher was Antonino Votto, who had been the right hand of Arturo Toscanini. At the first lesson, Votto taught you how to beat time, says Muti. Then he said how important it was to study music through and through. You would later find your own ways of communicating with an orchestra.

"I was a good pianist," says Muti, "but I was too nervous when I performed, and I did not want to spend my life sitting at a keyboard in front of a wall." He became Maestro Muti.

These days, he says, people become conductors all too easily, without sufficient training or depth. "It's a disaster," he says. "Somebody plays the flute, and the next day he starts to conduct." This problem is especially felt in the opera house, he says.

I ask him about familiar music - ultra-familiar music, such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, or

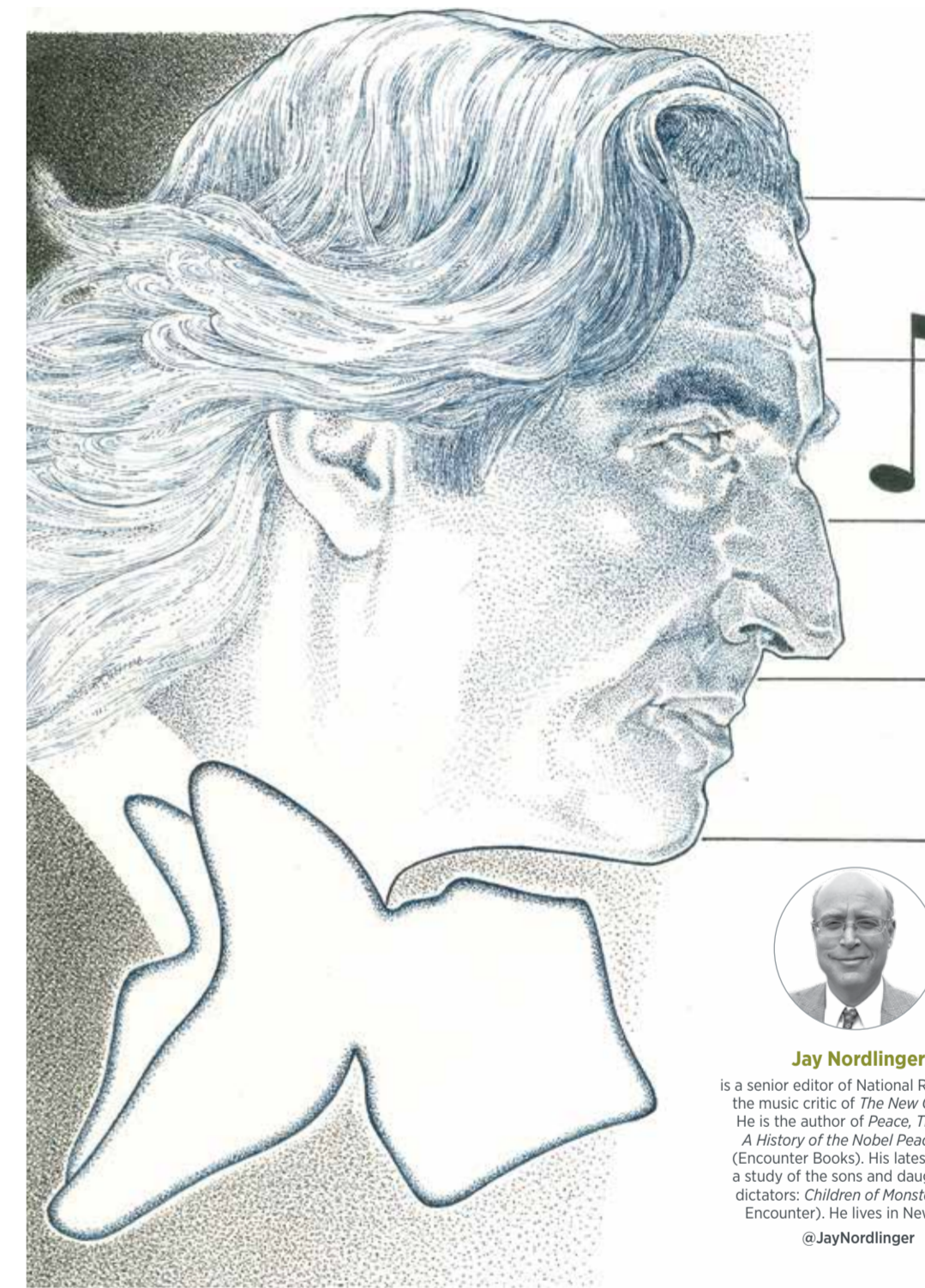
observes. It is the conductor's job - any musician's job - to find the music between the notes.

One of Muti's non-musical features has been his hair - a great, enviable, much-commented-upon head of hair. Call it "la forza del destino," he says with a chuckle. (*La Forza del Destino*, or "The Force of Destiny," is the title of a Verdi opera.) He does not fuss with his hair, he says. It is cut by a simple barber. And, no matter what people claim, it's natural. It is what it is.

In his career, this mane has been both "croce e delizia," says Muti, both cross and delight - a mixed blessing. (That is a line from another Verdi opera, *La Traviata*.)

Years ago, I asked Maestro Lorin Maazel about the future of classical music. The first words out of his mouth were "Thank God for China." Muti sympathizes with this sentiment. In East Asia, he says, they believe in Western culture practically more than we do in the West. We must not take for granted what we have, he cautions.

I raise the subject of pop music. "In music with a capital M," he says, "there is no distinction" - no distinction between the classical and the popular. He notes that some pop songs touch the heart and live forever: *Volare*, another.



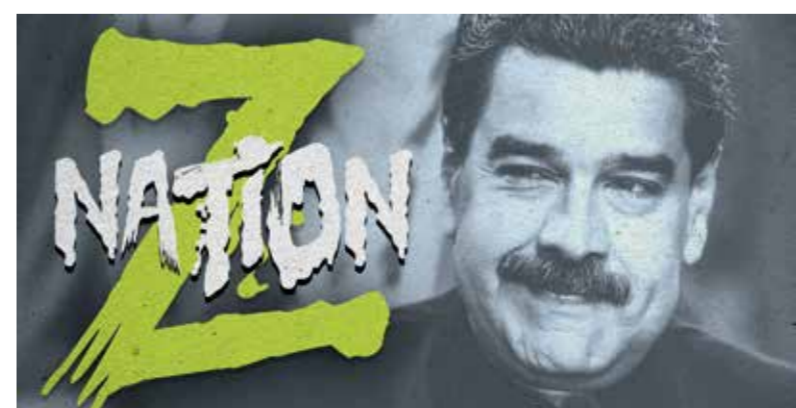
Jay Nordlinger
is a senior editor of National Review and the music critic of *The New Criterion*. He is the author of *Peace, They Say: A History of the Nobel Peace Prize* (Encounter Books). His latest book is a study of the sons and daughters of dictators: *Children of Monsters* (also Encounter). He lives in New York.

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for example (by Domenico Modugno). And "some symphonies, it is better to burn." Muti admires Céline Dion, the Canadian pop singer. And he quotes the Bible: There is a time for everything, including all sorts of music. Sometimes you need one thing, another time another.

He always needs Mozart, he says. "You can conduct him every night." And Beethoven, "almost every night." Tchaikovsky, "maybe two times a week - not because he is less important but because you need more time to rest. You don't want to get overexcited." Riccardo Muti has been at the top

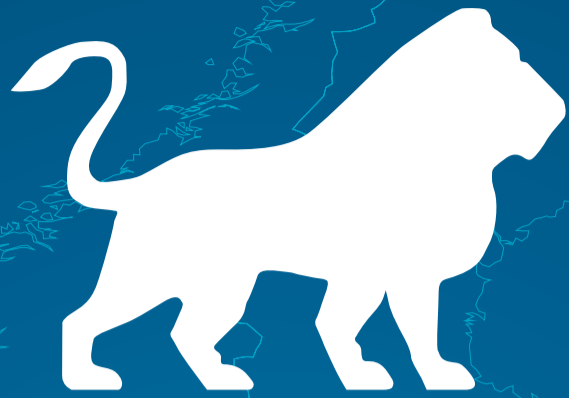
of the conducting heap for a long time. "But, in a way, I remain provincial as a person," he says. "After the last note of every concert or opera I conduct, I go back to being the normal person from the south of Italy. Every time, it's a sort of miracle that I am able to conduct an orchestra." ■



Among conservatives, Hugo Chávez never really got credit for how skilled a politician he was. Many wrote him off as a cruel joke and few put in the effort to understand his ideological make-up which unusually combined, among others, Karl Marx, Simon Bolivar and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Chávez will undoubtedly remain a popular hero for a small part of the Venezuelan population and an icon for an astonishingly large part of the t-shirt ideologues of the Western left for a long time to come. Why? Not because he found the holy grail of socialism that works, but because, like

many glamorous stars, he died before it all went wrong. Nicolás Maduro has continued the policies of Chávez but without the panache of his predecessor. There is absolutely nothing which suggests that Venezuela's recent history would have been different in any substantial way if Chávez hadn't died. The economy was already headed for a breakdown under Chávez's tenure and large parts of Venezuelan democracy had already been abolished to protect the revolution. Maduro simply finished the job by destroying what was left of the economy and dissolving the last remnants of democracy.

We all die in the end. Stars such as Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse live fast, die young and leave a good-looking corpse. Some socialist revolutionaries like Chávez and Che Guevara might not be eligible to join the 27 Club, but have nevertheless been lucky enough to die before the mess they made of things becomes obvious to all. Maduro isn't that lucky. Like his namesake Nicolae Ceausescu, Nicolás Maduro will never be pictured on any t-shirts, shackled as he is to what is left of the rotting zombie corps of a failed revolution. ■



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