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Issue #14 | December 2019

THE CONSERVATIVE

A fortnightly Newspaper by the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Party | theconservative.online





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THE CONSERVATIVE

The Conservative is a fortnightly newspaper available in print and online published and owned by the ECR Party, formerly known as Alliance of the Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (ACRE).

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BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF BRITAIN

On December 12th British voters go to the polls in a contest called as a Brexit election. It has turned into an existential fight with freedom and the country's market economy at stake

by Gerald Warner

To understand what is happening in the current UK general election it is necessary to put it in the context of Britain's unique political history. Regular parliamentary elections have been held in Britain for centuries, albeit with a minuscule electorate in early times, longer than in any other EU state. British political parties emerged in the period 1679-81, during a crisis relating to the succession to the throne, with the two contending factions becoming known as Whigs and Tories.

That early history is still relevant today because it explains the principal characteristic of British politics: it is intrinsically binary. Unlike European nations where multi-party politics routinely creates shifting coalition governments, the United Kingdom retains what is basically a two-party system. At the current election the longstanding Conservative/Labour antithesis, though not commanding exclusive electoral support, remains at the heart of the contest: one of these two parties will form the next government.

Yet despite its enduring hold on British politics, the binary system has to some extent been eroded. As recently as 2010-15 the Conservative Party was forced to enter into coalition with the Liberal Democrats in order to form a government. Coalitions are so rare in British politics that commentators began to proclaim the death of the two-party system. It came back with a vengeance in 2015, however, when David Cameron won an election outright, the Liberal Democrats were ruined and the Conservatives formed a majority government.

But the two-party system remained fragmented in the outlying regions of the United Kingdom, especially in Scotland where the Scottish National Party (SNP) has run the devolved government since 2007; in the last parliament it held 35 seats at Westminster and pollsters believe it will make some gains in the current contest. In Wales the presence of Welsh nationalists (Plaid Cymru) has less significantly eroded the two-party system: there were only four Plaid Cymru MPs in the last parliament.

Northern Ireland has its own unique political ecosystem: the main British parties have no presence there and for the Unionist and Nationalist parties the overriding issue is the

repeats their slogan "Get Brexit Done". In contrast, the Labour Party is trying to pretend that Brexit is not the issue but that the election is about the National Health Service, other public-sector facilities, the need to end "austerity" by opening the floodgates of public expenditure, "inequality" – almost anything except Brexit.

From the start of the campaign the Conservatives have been worried about one problem. It is an axiom of British general elections that whatever issue was dominant on the day the election was called is virtually forgotten by polling day. The Tories therefore face the challenge of keeping Brexit in the forefront of the campaign, while simultaneously avoiding the accusation of indifference towards the bread-and-butter issues that preoccupy the electorate. Throughout the first half of the campaign they have been fairly successful in surmounting this challenge, but the longer the contest runs the more difficult it may become.

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There has never before been so wide a gap between the rival parties' spending plans. So astronomic are the sums pledged by Labour there is a widespread expectation that voters will regard them as a fantasy.

continuation of the Union with the United Kingdom – once again, a binary political division. The main nationalist party Sinn Fein had seven MPs elected to the last parliament but in accordance with their separatist tradition they abstained from taking their seats. Since Unionist MPs do take their seats, that gives them an advantage: the recent government of Theresa May was sustained in power by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

That is the background to the general election now being fought in Britain. For the Conservatives this is the Brexit election. Every speech, leaflet, broadcast or social media output from the Conservatives relentlessly

The Conservatives have the advantage over every other party, except Nigel Farage's Brexit Party, that they are campaigning for the implementation of a democratic referendum result. That is why Labour is desperate to keep the Brexit issue off the radar. For, although 5 million Labour voters opted in the referendum to Leave the EU, the Labour Party leadership, parliamentary membership and activist base are all solidly pro-Remain. The loss of 5 million votes would be catastrophic for Labour and the leader of the opposition, Jeremy Corbyn, is well aware of the fact.

In response he has crafted an absurd policy. A putative Labour government would negotiate a new withdrawal



ANALYSIS

LABOUR

DOGGED BY ANTISEMITISM AND PLEDGING A SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

by Maggie Pagano



voters will never turn Tory, but they could be persuaded to vote for the Brexit Party. If that claim turns out to have substance and the Leave vote is split in the North, Boris Johnson will be blamed for his intransigence.

The policies being presented by Labour and the Conservatives present a startling contrast. Labour has pledged to open the floodgates of public expenditure and nationalise the economy on an eye-watering scale. The Conservatives, in contrast, have made only the most modest commitments, pledging to freeze tax rates, but not to cut taxes except in very limited areas. There has never before been so wide a gap between the rival parties' spending plans. So astronomic are the sums pledged by Labour there is a widespread expectation that voters will regard them as a fantasy.

These fiscal commitments may prove to be academic, however. The obstructive tactics of pro-Remain MPs in the last parliament inflamed public opinion. Many Remain voters who accepted the outcome of the referendum have been shocked by the perceived anti-democratic sentiments behind the slogan "Stop Brexit!" It seems inevitable that this election will be determined by the weight of Remain/Leave opinion – the latest binary antithesis to define British politics. ■

Britain's voters are being asked to make the starkest choice on how the country is run and how they live their lives since Lady Thatcher came to power in 1979. The choice in the election taking place in a few days time is this: a vote for the Conservatives would provide a mandate to agree a new Brexit deal with the European Union and an end to Britain's age of austerity.

Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, proposes to spend billions more on the NHS employing more doctors, nurses and new hospitals but also to invest in the country's infrastructure. There are to be tax cuts for the less well-off and other measures to boost enterprise. The other choice being presented to voters by Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party is for a neo-Marxist, Stalinist tax-and-spend socialist extravaganza combined with the biggest ever nationalisation programme in the history of Britain, probably in Western Europe.

The scale of Corbyn's ambitions to take over a chunk of the UK's major industries including rail, mail, water, energy, the power grid and telecoms industries to provide free broadband is breathtaking in its scale and reach. He also has plans for a national pharmaceuticals company taking control of selling medicines to the NHS while Labour insiders say there are secret plans proposing the take over of advertising and other forms of media.

There are to be stiff new rent controls on landlords and the right for tenants to buy homes from owners at less than the market price. Perhaps the most insidious of all the policies is Corbyn's proposal to confiscate 10% of the shares in all of Britain's biggest companies - and give them to the workers in a new fund but with the taxes raised on dividends going to the Treasury. Without question, a Corbyn government would deliver the most radical socialist programme of state control ever attempted in the UK. The manifesto would make even some of the world's most crackpot left-wing dictators in South America blush with embarrassment at the pathetic scale of their own ambitions. Labour's manifesto also promises to spend another £83bn a year on public services, to be paid for by the so-called rich - those earning £80,000 a year - and by raising corporation taxes on companies to 26%, slashing R & D allowances and putting up capital gains taxes.

And how will Labour propose to pay the £1 trillion estimated cost for all this? Corbyn, and the shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, want to borrow by issuing more government bonds. You can see the scenario now: huge issue of new borrowing, Sterling collapsing, interest

rates sky-high and overseas investment stopping. What is so extraordinary - and tragic - about this election is that you would have imagined that 30 years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and Thatcher's economic reforms, that the arguments for the virtues of the capitalist method of doing business had been won against the strictures of communism and state-control. Paradoxically, that battle has clearly not been won in the UK. Instead, the debate merely disappeared under the surface until the extreme left-wingers took over the Labour leadership and installed Corbyn.

The financial crisis has proved to be a fertile breeding ground for discontent, with distrust of bankers feeding into distrust of big business which the Conservatives have done little to disabuse to their cost and are now paying the price. Obsessed by Brexit, the government forgot to press ahead with urgent reforms on topical issues. These include reforming business rates, boosting technical education to investing more in basic infrastructure and encouraging big City of London shareholders to vote against huge salary packages. It's this atmosphere of distrust that Corbyn has been able to exploit.

What's as important as the huge cost of a Labour government is the impact its plans would have on the nation's enterprise culture and future growth. There are already murmurings from some of the country's brightest that they would consider leaving the country, as we saw in the 1970s brain-drain. Will businesses follow them and will investors stop heading to Britain? City firms have already moved money abroad on fears that Labour would introduce capital controls, stopping money leaving the country, while at least two of the UK's biggest energy companies have moved their domicile overseas.

Many of Britain's Jews say they are going to leave because of Labour's inherent antisemitism. In perhaps the most astonishing and saddest reflection of what's happening in the UK, a recent survey showed nearly half of the Jewish community would leave country if Corbyn comes to power. Relations have deteriorated to such depths that Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, head of Britain's Jews, shocked the nation by breaking with convention to state publicly that Corbyn is unfit for high office, that those with a conscience should not vote for him and that the "very soul of our country is at stake" in this election.

The Conservatives are wrong if they think this election is about Brexit: it's far, far more important than that. ■



BRUSSELS READY TO STEP UP FIGHT WITH BIG TECH

The European Union is promising to get tough with the out of control giants of the web and the new Commission takes office pledged to deal with internet governance. A global fightback against Mark Zuckerberg and the other titans of Silicon Valley is overdue. Can Europe win this vital battle?

by **Walter Ellis**

The fightback has begun, and this time it is the Old World coming to the rescue of the new. Sir Tim Berners-Lee, generally acknowledged to be the father of the worldwide web, has launched a global action plan, known as the Contract for the Web, aimed at preventing the emergence of what he calls a “digital dystopia”. The contract which, in principle, has the support of many of the world’s high-tech mega-corporations, including Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and Google – though not yet Apple or Huawei – would install a voluntary regulatory framework intended to halt, or at least restrict, the spread of fake news, privacy violations and the “Dark Web”. At the same time, the new European Commission, taking office in Brussels last month, has promised sustained

and concerted action to counter all forms of digital abuse. Margrethe Vestager, previously the Competition Commissioner, known for her readiness to impose anti-trust fines measured in billions of dollars, has been given an enhanced role and charged with creating a “Europe fit for the digital age”. The former Danish finance minister, both of whose parents were Lutheran pastors, is determined to rein in the ambitions of America’s Big Tech giants so that the rights of individual citizens are protected and democratically-elected governments, not corporations, set the rules that determine and regulate the digital future. Ranged against Berners-Lee and Vestager are a raft of digital revolutionaries led by Mark Zuckerberg, the founder and CEO of Facebook, who this month defied calls for him to ban political advertsing, and Tim

Cook, the head of Apple, who in 2016 said that an EU ruling requiring his company to pay Ireland \$13 billion in back-taxes was “total political crap”. Zuckerberg, who is officially paid just \$1 a year to run Facebook but has shares in the company currently valued at \$74 billion, has been doing the rounds of world governments lately, in which he invariably promises to ensure high ethical values while in practice carrying on much as before. During a 90-minute question and answer session with the European Parliament, there were lots of questions but very few answers, leaving MEPs fuming. The question which Berners-Lee’s Contract for the Web most obviously addresses is a simple one: is it acceptable that super-rich corporations should wield more power over the world’s citizens than their elected governments? Speaking last week to the Guardian newspaper, the British engineer and computer scientist was in no doubt about the scale of the problem. “I think people’s fear of bad things happening on the internet is becoming, justifiably, greater and greater. If we leave the web as it is, there’s a very large number of things that will go wrong. We could end up with a digital dystopia ... It’s not that we need a 10-year plan for the web, we need to turn the web around now.” Vestager agrees. As things stand, she said recently, it is not we, as citizens, who are searching Google, it is Google that is searching us. “It is you who is being searched, because all the data that you leave behind makes you part of the product. Whenever you make a small query,

that query is not just a window into the internet, it is also a window into you.” As an executive vice president of the Commission, working closely with its incoming President, Germany’s Ursula Von der Leyen, Vestager has two primary concerns. The first is to ensure that America’s – and China’s – Big Tech corporations are not permitted to enjoy untrammelled power while paying only nominal tax. The second is to create the conditions under which Europe’s own high-tech companies can grow and multiply within a regulatory regime that is fit for purpose. “Europe,” she told a web summit in Lisbon this month, “has created a

platforms, services and products, and complete the Digital Single Market. Not long after Von der Leyen’s announcement, it was revealed that a body known as the Digital Single Market Strategic Group (DSMSG) was already at work drafting the act for presentation to the European Council, made up of heads of government, and the European Parliament. Whatever legislation subsequently emerges will have to take into account not only differences in the requirements of the 27 member states, not all of which agree on the standards to be met, but also the fact that whichever regulations are decided should be able to keep up with the speed at which the web moves. As Vestager put it in Lisbon, Google, Facebook and Twitter already know more about us than our doctors, lawyers and priests combined, and there was a risk that Europe would regulate for yesterday, not tomorrow, in which case whatever is laid down could end up useless. Though taking the side of the citizen, she was also at pains to point out that she is not anti-enterprise or anti-market. Describing herself as a liberal, rooted in Denmark’s Soft Left, she said that what was needed was an approach, combined with the right tools, that protected people against leaving a trace everywhere they went. She was not, she stressed, set on breaking up companies merely because they had reached a certain size. Break-up orders were the last tool in the box that, if misapplied, could have the unintended consequence of multiplying the problem. “When you become that big [like Facebook or Google], you get a special



“ The contract which, in principle, has the support of many of the world’s high-tech mega-corporations, including Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and Google – though not yet Apple or Huawei – would install a voluntary regulatory framework intended to halt, or at least restrict, the spread of fake news, privacy violations and the “Dark Web”.

dynamic start-up community with a lot of scale-up potential. If tech is only embedded in giant companies beyond the control of our democracies, then we lose trust in technology, and part of my mission is that we build trust by making sure that we reach for the potential but also do something to control the dark side.” Clear support for Vestager’s approach has already come from Von der Leyen, who in her statement of objectives for her first term as Commission president undertook to promote an EU Digital Services Act that would upgrade the Commission’s liability and safety rules for digital



responsibility because you are de facto the rule-setter in the market that you own, and we should be much more precise about what that entails. Otherwise, there is a risk that the many, many other interesting companies struggling to move forward will have no chance of competing.” How much of this approach is shared, even notionally by Zuckerberg, is a moot question. Jack Dorsey, the CEO of Twitter (net worth \$4.3 billion) recently took the decision to ban political advertising, much of which in recent times has been of a distinctly dubious character. Zuckerberg, by contrast, claims to be more concerned with protecting free speech (much of which is routed through Facebook). While recognising that lies are told and repeated over and over until they acquire the patina of truth, he refuses to become a censor, leaving that job to the individual, who often has no way of knowing what is true and what isn’t. “At times of social tension,” he said last month, “there has often been an urge to pull back on free expression... We will be best served over the long term by resisting this urge and defending free expression.” Facebook’s financial results are, by any calculation, colossal. By the end of this year’s third quarter, it boasted 2.45 billion users – close to one third of the world’s population. During the 12 months to October 31, it posted profits of £66 billion. With customers and income on that scale, Zuckerberg feels able to ridicule the idea that he has taken the stand he has on political ads simply to preserve earnings reckoned at between \$330m and \$400m, or less than 0.5 per cent of revenue. Rather, in the manner, some might say, of a supposedly benign Citizen Kane, he is increasingly focused on how he can best direct humanity’s future as the number one global influencer. Google, the pre-eminent search engine and owner of YouTube, presents its own problems to the likes of Berners-Lee and Vestager. If Facebook likes to think of itself as not so much a publisher than an enabler of self-publishing, Google is a platform for a myriad of other platforms. It is, if you like, the internet’s gateway drug. It is via its portals that everything else becomes possible. Most computer buffs and smart-phone addicts (which increasingly is all of us) start with Google. It offers us the world on a screen. Without it, literally billions of us would have no idea how to get through the day. The issue is that Google is not run as a public service, but as one of the world’s mightiest corporations, with revenues

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in this year’s third quarter of \$40.5 billion – 20 per cent up on the same period in 2018.

As the brain behind so much of the Net’s underlying search technology, Google is also the Earth’s greatest repository of knowledge. Its computers and digital storage factories link into everything twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. And if knowledge is power, then Google has more power than any of its rivals. The way it presents and showcases its information is central to its profitability. The more you pay, or the more you contribute to its storehouse of facts, the higher up the listings you go.

More worryingly, somewhere deep inside Google is the entrance into the nightmare of the Dark Web. The corporation’s programmers and

technicians work to ensure that sites dedicated to such horrors as child-abuse, sex-trafficking and terrorist financing do not see the light of day. But then it is the light of day that such sites seek strenuously to avoid. The battle is ongoing and unaffected by regulation.

On a more mundane level, industrial scale tax avoidance by corporations that have only a virtual presence in most of the countries they operate in, is a problem that governments, led by the example of the European Commission, might realistically hope to fix. To take the most celebrated example, Amazon is easily the world’s biggest online retailer, getting bigger by the day. Founder and leading shareholder Jeff Bezos, is, even after history’s most expensive divorce, sitting on a personal fortune of \$110 bn. In this year’s third quarter alone, the company’s sales topped \$66 billion. Yet for the 2018 tax year it paid nothing in US federal taxes and in fact won a rebate of \$129 million. In Europe, where it is being pursued by the Commission for its exploitation of Luxembourg’s labyrinthine tax regime, it similarly received tax credits, rather than tax bills, worth €241 million.

Strictly speaking, this is not an internet problem, but a matter of institutional mis-governance. Again, though, it will be Vestager, in her role as the world’s leading trustbuster and revenue collector, who looks best placed to come up with a solution. Vestager is said to be feared in Silicon Valley. President Donald Trump has gone so far as to tweet that she hates the United States more than any other person he has ever met. Who better, then, than the 51-year old Dane, who once served as her country’s minister for ecclesiastical affairs, to stop the rot? ■

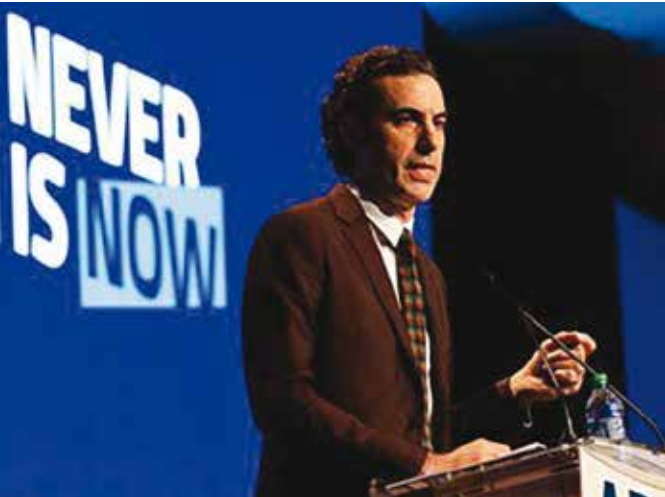
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Comedian gets to the heart of the serious TRUTH ABOUT SILICON VALLEY

by **Joseph Rachman**



When the comedian Sacha Baron Cohen accepted the Anti-Defamation League’s International Leadership Award last month, he gave a speech which went viral because it captured the growing anger felt towards social media companies.

The moment that grabbed most attention was when Baron Cohen, attacking Facebook for not placing any sorts of limits on political advertising, claimed that “if Facebook were around in the 1930s, it would have allowed Hitler to post 30-second ads on his “solution” to the “Jewish problem”.” However, Baron Cohen’s speech was also notable for the wider call he made to increase regulatory oversight of all social media companies, to hold them liable for content posted by users.

Baron Cohen expressed the now common worry about the rise of demagogues and conspiracy theories undermining the social consensus that underpins democracy. He then argued that social media companies had played a vital role in this process terming them “the greatest propaganda machine in history”. Given the danger to democracy and potential for violence Baron Cohen argued there needed to be a “fundamental rethink” of how social media companies operated.

He then turned to rebutting what he felt were the common arguments made by social media companies against calls for greater regulation by dissecting Mark Zuckerberg’s recent remarks to Congress on the matter. Regarding claims that the issue was one of free expression Baron Cohen rejected that defence: “Freedom of speech is not freedom of reach”. He argued that social media companies had a duty not to give bigots, extremists, and child abusers a “free platform”.

Continuing in the vein of responsibility and accountability he took aim at Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg and what he termed the Silicon Six which also included Google’s Sundar Pichai, Alphabet’s Larry Page and Sergey Brin, YouTube’s Susan Wojcicki, and Twitter’s Jack Dorsey. He argued that these six individuals “who decide what information so much of the world sees [...] care more about boosting their share price than about protecting democracy.” He termed their ability to impose their judgement of what is appropriate on the world free of all governmental and legal restraint a form of “ideological imperialism”.

Baron Cohen blasted Zuckerberg’s claim he simply wanted to welcome a “diversity of ideas”, arguing this was predicated on the false idea that there are always two sides of any argument. Highlighting the issue of Holocaust denial on Facebook. Also easily accessible via Google, he said on the issue of the Holocaust there simply were not two reasonable sides. Baron Cohen argued that Facebook should work with groups like the NAACP and ADL to remove fake news and conspiracy theories from their sites. While Baron Cohen admitted Zuckerberg was right that it was hard to draw a line he argued this was still disingenuous and the main objection by Zuckerberg, and other tech figures, was potential costs.

Turning to what must be done Baron Cohen argued that tech companies had shown themselves completely unwilling to self-regulate. Their business model of generating engagement profited from promoting outrage. He argued the solution lay in treating social media companies as publishers. This would mean companies such as Facebook and Twitter becoming liable for defamation and libel suits over user generated content. He said company CEOs should face prosecution and imprisonment if they continued to allow their sites to be used as tools of foreign interference in elections or to promote genocide - as Facebook was used in Myanmar.

This was a powerful and important speech that will continue to resonate. ■



There is a potential earthquake rumbling beneath the surface of Swedish politics. For many in Europe, this Scandinavian state is known as a bastion of Social Democracy. Indeed, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) have been the largest party in every election held in the country since 1914, an electoral dominance which has enabled the party's leaders to significantly shape the direction of Swedish governments for over a century.

Now, however, there are signs that the political landscape is shifting. There is a new force in town, led by the Sweden Democrats (SD), a party which has come to provide a powerful conservative voice in Sweden's national politics. The party have been gaining ground since they first entered the *Riksdag* in 2010, and have won more votes and seats in every subsequent election. In the last national contest, in 2018, they emerged as the third largest party.

They have begun to set their sights even higher. A poll published on 15 November 2019 by the Swedish political research company, Demoskop, showed that, for the first time, the SD had overtaken the SDP to become the country's most popular party. This will no doubt be seen by the SD's leadership as a vindication of their efforts to reform their party since the end of the 1990s.

When it was founded in 1988, the SDThe SD had controversial origins. When it was founded in 1988 it was associated with Sweden's far-right, an

ideology which the party now rejects. The architects of the SD's modern manifestation are the party's leader, Jimmi Akeson, and its current leader in the *Riksdag*, Mattias Karlsson. They are now committed to a more inclusive Swedish civic ideal, one based upon conservative values.

Earlier this month, I interviewed Mattias Karlsson after he had delivered a speech on "Building a unified Conservative caucus" at the New Direction Academy in Dubrovnik.

I asked Karlsson to tell me about his personal journey and his political career so far.

"I was born in a working class family in the countryside of Sweden. I would describe my family politically as being socially conservative in a more traditional European sense. They were conservative on most issues when it comes to law and order, respecting institutions such as the monarchy and the church, believing in duties and hard work... family and tradition. Since they were working class, they tilted to the left, supporting the Social Democrats."

Karlsson says that one of his early political heroes was his grandfather, a factory worker and Social Democrat voter who fought for industrial rights. But, he adds, his grandfather was always a patriot, a working man who loved Sweden's history, culture and values which he believes the SAP have now abandoned. Not long before he died, Karlsson tells me, his grandfather voted for the Sweden Democrats.

The conservative Sweden Democrats hope to cause a political earthquake in a country traditionally wedded to social democracy

by **Jack Dickens**

Turning to his student years, he admits that "I was not really into politics at all". His plan, after studying at Sweden's Lund University in the late 1990s, was to be a history teacher. While he was there, however, "it was the immigration issue that made me interested in politics". He says that he had seen mass immigration policies cause "cultural clashes" and "change the whole social fabric of the area".

"It made me look for parties, and then I found this small party that almost no one knew about, and I just joined. I thought I was going to hand out a few leaflets for the European election campaign in 1999, but it turned out to be a bit more."

This is one of the things that is interesting about Karlsson – his political journey began with his concerns about the mismanagement of immigration policies; but while this has earned him the ire of social democrats, he has also come under fire from Sweden's far-right. He recalls not only

time that I realised I was a conservative". Karlsson in particular points to Scruton's emphasis upon "the importance of home, duty, beauty, and virtues" in preserving "civic society" and "the nation state".

He said that Scruton is the key thinker underlying his own analysis that "issues of economics are becoming secondary to culture" across the West. "What we're seeing is a conflict between 'anywheres' and 'somewheres'...the whole EU debate is connected to that. The problems that Eastern Europe has with Eurocrats is connected to that. The heated debate that we're seeing in the United States with the success of Donald Trump is connected to that. And our success in Scandinavia is connected to that."

Karlsson believes that this re-orientation of the debate provides an opening for conservative parties like his own. He describes the Sweden Democrats as a "patriotically-oriented new conservative" party that is

Party will also join them. Talks have been underway with the Moderates and, if an agreement can be secured, Karlsson is confident that his party could form a coalition majority after the next election.

What would the significance of such an alliance be? "It would be historic in Sweden" he says, because "This would be the first genuinely conservative government for almost one hundred years. It would be an earthquake in Sweden, and in Scandinavia as a whole".

On a European level, Karlsson believes that non-socialist parties have allowed themselves to become too divided. What is needed, he argues, is greater cooperation amongst conservatives on the international stage so that they can catch up with, and combat, those he calls the "globalists" and "social liberals". He fears that a failure to do so will lead to further decades of social liberal political dominance across Europe.

“The SD had controversial origins. When it was founded in 1988 it was associated with Sweden’s far-right, an ideology which the party now rejects. The architects of the SD’s modern manifestation are the party’s leader, Jimmi Akeson, and its current leader in the *Riksdag*, Mattias Karlsson. They are now committed to a more inclusive Swedish civic ideal, one based upon conservative values.

"clearly to the right of centre" on law and order, immigration, and national sovereignty.

However, they are also "slightly to the left of the centre" on taxation and social welfare. This blend, Karlsson says, means that "We are the only party to the right who are taking working class votes from the Social Democrats. The traditional liberal conservative parties don't really have that traction."

Karlsson's party have already have an agreement with the Christian Democrats: they will seek to govern with the SD if the election results in 2022 permit. The question now is whether the classical liberal Moderate

tal movement.

Karlsson praises the work of the ECR and New Direction in bringing conservatives together in cooperation. He is also developing a new initiative in Sweden – in February 2020, he will be launching the country's first conservative think tank, *Hereditas*.

Overall, Karlsson is cautiously optimistic about the prospects of conservatism in Sweden: in his speech, he said that "I feel that the tide is finally turning". Whatever the ways in which Swedish politics play out over the next few years, it is clear the tide of public opinion has already shifted significantly in a conservative direction. ■



Tears of Freedom

The fall of the Berlin Wall on November the 9th 1989 was a magical and unique date, a milestone of collective emotion



Photo: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES / U.S. NATIONAL GUARD



by **Hermann Tertsch MEP**

“Never in history had so many people ever cried together. Never had the joy been so contagious. Those images moved the world. It was the stunned joy of the oppressed being released without warning. Suddenly a new world of democracy, and yet unknown freedoms, was made possible. In addition, the German national anthem was played, and German flags were waved without the Proletarian State emblem, in unique images of exaltation at the symbiosis of intimate emotions and awareness of the transcendence of personal and collective liberation.

communist leaders were resisting the will of the people, some even played with the idea of crushing the revolts with violence, as China had done in June that same year in Tiananmen Square. Preparations, like in Leipzig, were advanced. There could have been a humanitarian disaster instead of a sea of joy in Europe during those days in November.

The Iron Curtain was already beginning to crack. On June 27th Ministers from Hungary and Austria,

Gyula Horn and Alois Mock, cut the barbed wire along their common border. Foreign journalists asked Günther Schabowski, one of the Communist leaders, when the liberalization of travel permits to the West were going to enter into force. He didn't know – no one did – and wanted to avoid trouble by saying, "I must assume from now on". That response led many to approach the border. They advanced, crossed it and nobody prevented them from doing it. That is how this miraculous day took place. Mikhail Gorbachev, aware of his economic bankruptcy, had his plans of Perestroika and Glasnost (reform and transparency), which excluded crushing heterodoxies in their European satellites. The USSR had no money in 1989, nor strength or will to prevent the satellite states from splitting. The subjects of the second superpower lived as needy inhabitants of the Third World. The recipe was simple – less socialism and more truth.

Thirty years ago, communism took its worst blow. Its hegemony over half the continent disappeared, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall, erected so that no one could flee from the socialist paradise in which very few wanted to stay. The closure in 1961 of the last escape route through the Iron Curtain from the gigantic prison with nine time zones between Berlin and Vladivostok showed that it could

only retain the humans locked up and under threat of death. They cynically called it the "Anti-Fascist Protection Wall" (Antifaschistischer Schutzwall). Its mission was to avoid invasions, not the other way round.

I visited the entire Iron Curtain once again in the summer of 1989, from north to south, inside and outside, and wrote a series of articles under the heading "The Glass Wall" which was a chronicle of the shipwreck. That summer I went back to Spain for a debate on TVE and found there defenders of the permanence of the Wall as "good for stability". In few countries were there so many people who mourned its fall as there were in Spain. A sad fact that explains so many others.

Europe soon forgot that its best moment of unity and exaltation of the freedom of the human being came thanks to resolution against evil, not by appeasement or concessions to it. It was the force of conviction in Christian values that moved the people to end the totalitarian depravity of communism. November 9th was the victory of the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino over the Wall and the Soviet tanks, of truth and force over lies and violence. It was glorious but, like everything human, ephemeral. Celebrations were still taking place in Berlin when the totalitarian forces were already reorganising far away at the Brazilian Sao Paulo Forum to relaunch subversion to undermine and destroy free societies. The tears of happiness for the truth recovered from then have been again replaced many times by the tears of terror, hunger, totalitarian communist crime and lost freedom. Today the entire West is once again torn between the fears and hopes of that permanent and transcendent pulse between truths and lies. ■



ECR Party takes leading role in environmental debate



On the 14th of November the European Conservatives and Reformists Party held their fifth Blue-Green Summit in Brussels. The conference covered a number of topics ranging from rewilding and deforestation to the geopolitics of the oil and gas industry.

Speakers included the journalist and broadcaster James Delingpole, Members of the European Parliament from across the political spectrum including Isabel Benjumea from the Peoples Party in Spain and Daniel Hannan from the British Conservative Party. There were also keynote speeches from the Brazilian mission to the EU on the situation in the Amazon and a speech by Dr Alan Riley, an advisor to the Atlantic Council on oil and gas matters.

Perhaps one of the more interesting points raised during the conference was the relative impact of the Palm Oil industry South and East Asia. The arguments for Palm Oil as opposed to Oil Seed Rape are rarely made in Europe – despite the fact that

the yields per acre on Palm Oil are much higher. This means that in real terms, Palm Oil is much better for the environment than Rape Seed Oil. In addition to this, it also requires much less land usage than other agricultural products farmed in the region, and the land that is used is turned to forestry, meaning that there is an abundance of biodiversity in the regions where palm oil is harvested.

The green movement has long had palm oil in its crosshairs, but as was discussed at the Blue-Green Conference, the claims made by the left don't stand up to scrutiny.

The other key panel was on the future of the EU's energy markets – and what the energy mix will look like in the future. The panel concluded that despite strong cross party attempts to endorse green renewable energy – it is difficult to see Europe breaking away from oil, gas and coal in the coming decades unless vast amounts of money are put into nuclear energy and waste and energy technology. ■

New Moldovan Prime Minister moves towards Moscow's influence

The Republic of Moldova isn't a country that often makes headlines. The small former Soviet State with a population of just under 3 million people often goes unnoticed in the grand scheme of things, and yet it is currently at the centre of a great political upheaval.

Elections earlier this year yielded inconclusive results – the large swing towards pro-European parties that had been expected failed to materialise leaving the country in limbo. The result was an unholy alliance of the former Communist Party, that has ruled the country on and off for the last three decades, and the pro-European reformers whose entire platform had been about rooting out their corruption. In doing so, the Action and Solidarity Party of Maia Sandu broke their pre-election promise of not going into coalition with the Socialist Party (PSRM).

This awkward Alliance propelled Sandu to the top of Moldovan politics in June this year. There was a brief sense of optimism as a real moderniser took the reins and was prepared to change the country and finally rid it of

corruption. However, that optimism quickly faded when it became apparent that the PSRM planned to continue with business as usual.

Which brings us to the vote of no confidence against the government that took place on the 12th of November – just five months after the coalition formed. The vote was tabled by Ms Sandu's coalition partners in a bid to remove the Action and Solidarity Party from government. On the 14th of November, PSRM announced their new candidate for Prime Minister from their own party and won support from the Democratic Party – their coalition partners in the previous mandate.

The new Prime Minister, Ion Chichu, is a former advisor to the Minister of Finance and comes from the same region as the country's President, Igor Dodon. Both men are seen to have close ties to Russia, as do their new coalition partners from the Democratic Party. As a result, the country is expected to slide backwards in terms of its relationship with the European Union.



Photo published

Local elections in October also saw pro-Russian candidates from the PSRM take control of councils across the country, including the Mayoralty of Chisinau. The local elections also saw a strong showing for the ECR affiliated SOR Party who stood on a platform of improving public services and creating a welfare state. ■

ECR Group denounces suppression of Iranian protestors

ECR Group Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Anna Fotyga MEP has condemned the use of lethal force by the Iranian regime against activists and demonstrators.

The current protests, which were sparked by a sudden rise in fuel prices, have taken place in cities across Iran. International human rights organisations have claimed that at least 106 people have been killed, with suggestions that the figure could be as high as 200. Video footage also shows security services using firearms, water cannons and tear gas to quell the unrest.

Condemning the brutal use of force by the Iranian Authorities, Fotyga said: "I strongly condemn the use of

lethal force by the regime in Tehran against the people of Iran.

"The democratic world cannot cooperate with a regime actively engaged in murdering its own people for the 'crime' of seeking greater freedom and prosperity. This barbaric clampdown against protesters, massive arrests and the shutdown of the internet shows that the regime prioritizes its personal power and wealth at the expense of its own people.

"The personal responsibility of Ayatollahs and members of the Revolutionary Guards for the bloodshed is clear and justice should be delivered. I call the VP/HR for a strong and firm action." ■



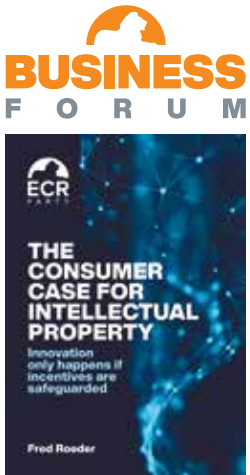
New platform for business launched by ECR Party

At their Autumn Gala dinner in Brussels, the European Conservatives and Reformists launched their new Business Forum. The new platform aims to connect the business community with politicians in a bid to come up with smarter regulation that doesn't hinder economic growth.

During the event – ECR Party chief executive Richard Milsom announced that the new forum would "bring Politicians together with small business owners, captains of industry and start-ups, to create a platform from which to engage. We hope that this new platform will create a space in which business can talk openly

about the need for smarter and more conscious regulation." And stated that the ECR Movement had long been

friends of the business community. The new platform hopes to encourage businesses, consumers and politicians to sit down and address the problems with existing regulations as well as new ones. A long-standing criticism of the European Union has been that it is a red tape factory, and that many of the directives that leave Brussels are out of touch with the needs of the market place. Often regulation supports existing big business and prevents the emergence of new competitive industries in Europe. This was highlighted



throughout the European Elections by politicians on all sides.

Daniel Hannan MEP and Carlo Fidanza MEP gave eloquent speeches. The event also saw the launch of a new study commissioned by the ECR Party into the need for changes to intellectual property law in order to make Europe more competitive. The report authored by Fred Roeder of the Consumer Choice Centre argues that current intellectual property laws in Europe are too lax and prevent cross border innovation in areas such as medicine, biosciences and food. The report argues that the failure of Europe to cooperate with the rest of the world has meant that it is falling behind and is stalling innovation.

The report entitled "The Consumer Case for Intellectual Policy", which is available on the ECR Party website, is the first report to address the need to revisit the need for changes to intellectual property rights and the first to call for a much closer relationship with American regulators. Mr Roeder cited the "impossible burger", a plant based meat substitute, as an example of the sort of GMO products that are available in the United States but not in Europe.

The full report – "The Consumer Case for Intellectual Policy: Innovation only happens if incentives are safeguarded" by Fred Roeder is available in its entirety on the ECR Party website. ■



ECR supports pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong

The ECR congratulates the democracy movement on its overwhelming success in the Hong Kong district elections, where an unprecedented turnout of voters endorsed its programme.

The ECR urged the Chinese government in Beijing to act in accordance with the policy of "one country, two systems" and to fully respect the outcome of the elections. They hope that China will respond positively to the clearly expressed views of the people of Hong Kong.

They believe that Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy should be preserved in line with the Basic Law and various international commitments, including the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984. The ECR also urges that the opportunity should now be seized to enhance democracy by meeting the protestors' reasonable demands. These include the release of protestors from custody and the establishment of an independent commission into police conduct.

At the same time, the ECR has called for the de-escalation of the



Photo: Shutterstock.com

violence and a positive response from the Hong Kong authorities, as well as assurances from their side that there will be no persecution of those involved in protest. They asked that Joshua Wong and other protest leaders be given the freedom to travel and to speak to international audiences, including the European Parliament, concerning their experiences.

The ECR stated that they believe such measures will be an important first step in repairing the damaged relations between Beijing's authorities and Hong Kong's protestors. In the long run, they hope to see the lives of people in China and Hong Kong improved by conciliation between the authorities and the democracy movement. ■

Nordstream project compromises EU's energy security

Last week, lovers of freedom everywhere celebrated the anniversary of the Berlin wall's destruction. Who would have thought that, just 30 years after the collapse of Soviet-inspired socialism, a new Russian threat would be working its way insidiously into the heart of our economic life.

In Germany, the Berlin wall came to represent the iron-fisted dictatorship of communism. Now a new construction – a pipeline – threatens to poison the well of democracy, erode our freedoms, and become the emblem of Western Europe's betrayal of Ukraine.

With Denmark's previously withheld approval now delivered, Nord Stream 2 is set to drive a final nail into the coffin of the EU's energy security.

It represents an additive needle, a wedge splitting the EU's economic and political integrity. In other words, it represents everything Putin would like to accomplish. The Russian autocrat wants to debase and direct our economic needs, and this is his Trojan Horse.

Perhaps it is a measure of former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's influence on German politics that no law yet exists that would allow him to be tried for his part in this scandal. Days after being voted out, but before departing office, he quickly signed the German state up to a contract with Gazprom. He then accepted a job with Gazprom weeks later.

There are also ethical questions surrounding Nord Stream 2 – Slave labour and wide-scale environmental harm are on the charge sheet. Russian based campaigners No to Gulags cite evidence that Russia employs up to 1,000 prisoners in the construction of the pipeline.

MEPs recently heard how they were enslaved below the minimum wage for 15 hours a day, working in the heaviest stages of construction. In a chilling echo of Europe's tragic past, the prisoners are also said to be used in sewing clothes for Gazprom employees.

Promoting the environment is Europe's current slogan du jour. However, if the EU already intends to become completely carbon neutral in its strategic vision by 2050, how does that square with gas pipeline investments to import natural gas from a country where production methods are so environmentally damaging?

Gas may be seen as a more environmentally friendly fossil fuel, but we still need to gauge its ecological footprint. We can be reasonably confident that green technology and production methods are not Russian priorities.

The new Commission President may trumpet a proposed carbon frontier mechanism in the form of a tax on goods from environmentally unfriendly third countries. But she avoids saying whether this would also apply to the gas that would flow to Germany.



Russia and Germany insist Nord Stream is a business, not a political project. But the commercial gains for some companies in Germany create much wider and significant political damage to the EU.

By 1st January, when the new pipeline is due to be completed, political nerves will be on edge. When you look at the war in Eastern Ukraine, it is noticeable that it remains distanced from the main gas transit pipelines, leaving them safe from the effects of the conflict. But what happens when Nord Stream 2 is up and running? The previous European Parliament did everything in its power to oppose the scheme. Sadly, MEPs do not have a legal way to suspend the project.

What will Germany's argument be if it turns out to be true that Russia is enslaving its own people in this joint Nord Stream project? And what will be the arguments of the participating Member States, and their businesses, not only in Germany but also in France, Austria, Great Britain, the Netherlands and elsewhere, who form the Nord Stream Project Consortium? Are their governments and citizens prepared to continue working with a partner that is tainted not only politically and ecologically, but also on its social rights record? For how long can economic interests outweigh ethical values? The closer we get to completion of Nord Stream 2, the more it becomes apparent how unethical this project is.

The project spells the end of the European Energy Union and all its beautifully-defined goals. It means Europe has missed the opportunity to geopolitically diversify its energy supply channels. It exposes a general ambivalence in European politics and exacerbates mistrust and inconsistency both between EU Member States and with the US.

At the end of it all, the only winner is Moscow. ■

The threat of communism lives on in Europe



The fall of the Berlin Wall brought an end to communism in Europe, but support for

the Soviets brutally tried to crush the unrest, nothing could stop us.

Today we should be commemorating the end of than ever in the Western world. That was the message from ECR Group Co-Chair Ryszard Legutko ahead of this weekend's commemorations to mark the 30th anniversary since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Speaking on Friday, Legutko, who was an anti-communism campaigner and dissident during communist rule in Poland, said: "The fall of the Berlin wall has come to be a symbol of the victory of the opposition to the communist system across Eastern Europe.

"While the Solidarity movement emerged in Poland, becoming a serious threat to the Soviet regime, opposition had spread across the bloc from Latvia to Hungary and the then Czechoslovakia. Though

commemorating the end of Communism in Europe, the most murderous system in the history of mankind. However, its fall has strengthened the hard left and support for the command economy in the Western world, instead of weakening it. They do not feel any responsibility for communism but – to the amazement of many Eastern Europeans – declare themselves to be its alternative. They are communists rebranded and what is just as concerning (is that) Christian Democrats are capitulating to the new left agenda.

"The anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall should be a time of reflection and to remember that there are some things we should never take for granted." ■





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LEADER COLUMN

Time for a FRESH START

With the new Commission in place, it is time for the European Union to address the issues that president Ursula von der Leyen says she will now lead on resolving. This is a time for a new beginning and that aspiration demands new thinking.

Mrs von der Leyen deserves support on all reasonable proposals. The ECR has already said it will assist her in finding a compromise solution on the EU Budget.

That process has already begun: on 18 November the EU Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement on budget increases in important areas including climate-related investment in innovation, research and infrastructure, as well as youth employment. This agreement, if ratified, will mean that Parliament has obtained funding totalling €850m more than initially proposed by the Commission. Jan Van Overtveldt (ECR, Belgium), chair of the Committee on Budgets, described this agreement as “a good sign showing that the EU institutions can deliver” and he emphasised that “the net increase compared to the Draft Budget presented by the Commission is the biggest under this Multiannual Financial Framework”.

But not all spending is beneficial and there are areas in which a sense of proportion needs to be inculcated. There is one sphere in particular where EU aspirations are overreaching reality and that is the issue of climate. Climate change is occurring and we must respond actively to the challenge. But the worst possible response would be to embrace the extravagant alarmism that is alienating some of the European public from the cause of climate change provision. On 28 November MEPs backed a resolution declaring a “climate and environmental emergency”. While a challenging situation is indeed developing, rhetoric provides no solutions. Instead, we need a responsible debate on the future of our economies and industries. Raising the EU’s emissions targets before our recently agreed goals have been implemented sends entirely the wrong message to business and ignores the concerns of communities and workers whose livelihoods are set to change dramatically.

Before preaching climate virtue to others, the EU needs to put its own house in order. That is why the ECR tabled a successful amendment to the climate resolution, calling for a single location for the European Parliament. The twelve journeys to Strasbourg each year are estimated to emit between 11,000 and 19,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions annually. That leaves MEPs open to a charge of hypocrisy. Ambitious targets on containment of climate change deserve support, if properly focused, but we must never lose sight of the interests of EU citizens facing alarming disruption in their working lives.

President von der Leyen also deserves support in opening up the single market in services, in finding a solution to the divisive immigration crisis, in developing tech/digital industries and forging new trade deals. Europe needs a new economic partnership policy with Africa, a region in which China is increasingly active. China represents a twin challenge to the EU, both in commerce and human rights. In the latter context the landslide victory of democrats in the Hong Kong elections is a welcome development and China should be left in no doubt that the world will judge its response.

But Mrs von der Leyen needs to bear in mind one overarching reality: the EU will never be a nation. The power of member states must not be diminished by removing their rights of veto. One example is the proposal to introduce financial sanctions for member states’ violations of the rule of law broadly relating to the budget, allowing the Commission to restrict a country’s access to EU funding. Since the decision would be taken via reverse qualified majority, theoretically a nation could be sanctioned even if a majority of member states (14) disapproved of the measure. That reflects a cavalier disregard of national sovereignty.

Mrs von der Leyen must not continue the previous Commission’s practice of violating the letter and spirit of the treaties to enforce the integration process. That ambition, currently championed by President Macron, is not shared by EU citizens. It is alienating whole communities and, as Brexit demonstrates, potentially whole nations. The integrationist drive must be halted before it fractures the already overstressed fabric of European unity. ■

Europe must do more to challenge CHINA’S PERSECUTION OF MUSLIM MINORITIES

A human rights catastrophe is unfolding in Xinjiang, and the EU’s inaction amounts to an abdication of moral leadership on the international stage

by Jack Dickens

In recent months, the protests in Hong Kong have drawn the attention of the world. Scenes of students and demonstrators raging against the Beijing Behemoth have invoked sharp criticisms from the international community, with many commentators denouncing the Chinese government’s crackdown as a calamitous violation of the city’s historic rights and freedoms.

Yet on the other side of the Chinese mainland, too, a calamity has been taking place. While the world has had its gaze fixed upon the Chinese government’s repression in the West, flagrant human rights abuses have been taking place in the north-western province of Xinjiang. Here, the region’s Muslim minorities are being silently, but systematically, coerced into concentration camps. It is a repression which is all the more sinister for the relative quietness with which it has been pursued.

The striking imbalance between the coverage of the Chinese government’s actions in Hong Kong and Xinjiang reflects the ways in which disparate geographies are mirrored by imbalances of power – the minorities of Xinjiang are exposed to the strong arm of state repression in a region where the Chinese government believes it can control dissidence with impunity. Until recently, Beijing has kept a firm grip of censorship on the region, rigorously preventing news of what is taking place from leaving the province.

The Chinese state has accordingly been able to repress the population in ways which are not possible in the well-publicised global hub of Hong

Kong. Beijing’s authorities have now coerced and detained an estimated one million ethnic Uighurs and Kazakhs into internment camps and prisons without trial since 2016. Beijing claims that these camps, which have been built across the Xinjiang, are for the purposes of voluntary re-education and for counter-extremism.

The Uighurs and Kazakhs are both Turkic-speaking peoples with their own traditions, culture, and language. The Uighurs have been in Xinjiang since at least the eighth century AD, when they migrated and settled the lands bordering modern day Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and

faith, cultural identity, and religiously-motivated terror. They argue that violent riots in the Xinjiang capital, Urumqi, in 2009 and 2014 as well as the more than one-hundred radicalised Uighurs who joined ISIS serve as a confirmation of this assessment. Accordingly, the Chinese government has reinvigorated its efforts to tackle what it sees as a subversive fifth column within its territories since 2016.

In November 2019, new information emerged about these efforts and the internment camps being run by the Chinese Communist Party in Xinjiang, when secret intelligence documents were leaked to the

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). The ICIJ has published translations of this cache of leaked intel, which includes five separate documents. These reveal the ways in which Beijing seeks to “re-educate” and brainwash its Muslim minorities and detail

how Beijing’s mass surveillance projects are linked to the government’s efforts in Xinjiang.

One item is a 2017 “Telegram” from the Communist Party commissioned in charge of security in Xinjiang. It was also approved by the man who was then the deputy secretary of Xinjiang’s Communist Party, Zhu Hailun. The Telegram is a manual for running detention camps in Xinjiang. Its contents show the methods and mechanisms that have been put into place to ensure the “ideological education” and “psychological correction” of China’s Uighurs and Kazakhs.

It conclusively proves that Beijing’s insistence that these camps are

“The Telegram is a manual for running detention camps in Xinjiang. Its contents show the methods and mechanisms that have been put into place to ensure the “ideological education” and “psychological correction” of China’s Uighurs and Kazakhs.



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voluntary is a lie. They are centres designed to bring about the forced Sinification of the population, and the Telegram is coldly sinister in its emphasis upon disciplining and punishing its inmates in the fine details of their daily lives. It instructs those operating the camps that they “must never allow escapes”, adding that “there must be full video surveillance coverage” in classrooms and dormitories at all times.

The “students” of these camps are made to spend their days on the “concentrated study of the national language (Mandarin)”, in the belief that this will lead to “de-extremification” and elevate their “cultural level”. This is combined with “ideological education” which is worked into the curriculum in order to “effectively resolve ideological contradictions, and guide students away from bad emotions.” Each student possesses a “file” in which “scores” are kept to “assess individually the students’ ideological transformation”, one which is linked to rewards and punishments for the inmate and their family.

This “transformation” is a process without end, even for those who manage to outwardly conform and become “integrated” into society. For, the Telegram makes clear, “Students must not leave the line of sight for one year and their performance should be grasped in a timely manner.” It is not specified precisely how long a period of time “a timely manner” describes. Who can tell how much suffering resides within so few words.

The methods employed by the Beijing government for identifying and coercing dissidents offer a showcase of the terrifying powers of the modern police state. Beijing now possesses surveillance capacities which George Orwell could not have imagined in his worst nightmares. Four

“bulletins” leaked to the ICIJ show secret intelligence briefings from Beijing’s Integrated Joint Operation Platform (IJOP), the government’s central data collection system. The IJOP are using artificial intelligence to select entire groups of Uighur and Kazakh people based upon algorithms which use data to compile lists of suspicious persons based upon their online profiles.

Personal information is acquired by stealth as much as by coercion. According to Human Rights Watch, the sources of data include numerous checkpoints that have been set up throughout Xinjiang with closed-circuit cameras using facial recognition software and spyware that the police require some Uighurs to install on their phones. The Chinese police in the region have also come to rely upon an app which they use to run detailed and intrusive background checks on individuals. The categories include physical measures of height and blood type as well as educational level, profession, and household electric meter readings.

Maya Wang, the senior China analyst at Human Rights Watch, said that the IJOP’s ultimate goal is to screen the entire population of Xinjiang for their behaviours and beliefs. She said that it has created “a background check mechanism, with the possibility of monitoring people everywhere”.

The bitter fruit of this mechanism has been the abductions which

have afflicted China’s Muslims. In 2017, a prominent Uighur academic at Xinjiang University, Tashpolat Tiyy, disappeared without a trace, and with no word from officials. His friends believe that he was convicted of separatism and sentenced to death in a secret trial. In February 2019, Aibota Serik, a Chinese Kazakh, told the BBC that her father, a local Imam in Tarbagatay, Xinjiang, was detained by local police. She said that “I don’t know why my father was imprisoned”, adding that “he didn’t violate

“The EU is at a crossroads. The architects of the European project need to decide whether the EU exists only to be a convenient marketplace for goods or whether it will seek to promote the common good of Europe and European values. They need to determine whether the EU’s purpose is only to defend consumer standards in the customs union or whether it will also fight for standards of human rights throughout an uncertain world.

any laws of China, he was not tried in a court”. She has not heard from him since.

Such stories have now become commonplace in Xinjiang. Within them, there is a haunting echo of Boris Pasternak’s masterpiece, *Dr Zhivago*, a novel set in the context of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and its traumatic aftermath, an era which Pasternak himself witnessed firsthand. Describing the way in which the Bolsheviks treated their political prisoners, Pasternak wrote of

one character’s tragic end that “One day, she went out and did not come back. She must have been arrested in the street at that time. She vanished without a trace and probably died somewhere, forgotten as a nameless number on a list that was afterwards deliberately misplaced, in one of the innumerable... concentration camps”.

These haunting echoes have now become deafeningly loud. The spectre of concentration camps is no longer a cipher from a buried European past – it is now a very real menace hanging over the lives of China’s Muslim minorities.

Yet so far, the institution which aspires to be the voice of Europe, the EU, has failed to take concrete action. An EU delegation which visited Xinjiang in January 2019 in order to gather evidence on China’s camps, under the supervision of Chinese officials, confirmed reports of “major and systematic human rights violations in Xinjiang.” Nonetheless, the EU has yet to impose sanctions in order to exercise diplomatic leverage.

Instead, the EU has resorted to hollow symbolism in the absence of geopolitical resolve. In May 2019, the EU’s ambassador in Beijing, Nicolas Chapuis, urged the Chinese government to “change the situation in Xinjiang”, and expressed the EU’s willingness “to engage in dialogue” on the matter. In October, the European parliament awarded its annual prize for the defence of human rights to a jailed Uighur academic, Ilham Tohti.

Beyond such gestures, the EU’s statesmen and women have failed to confront the bitter truth: that China’s administration in Xinjiang has become the negation of justice erected into a system of government and cannot be willed away with words alone. In Xinjiang, a tragedy is unfolding, but the EU has averted its gaze. Its measures have so far proven to be ineffectual in the face of human suffering. There could be no greater or more damning expression of Europe’s abdication of moral leadership on the international stage.

Ursula von der Leyen, the new President of the European Commission, now has the chance to rectify this course. She has already stated that she wants to lead “a geopolitical Commission” that would “define our relations with a more self-assertive China”. In her acceptance speech in the European parliament on 27 November, she pledged that Europe “can be the shapers of a better global order”, and that “this is Europe’s vocation”. Now she must come good on her rhetoric and grasp the nettle of China’s human rights record in Xinjiang.

The EU is at a crossroads. The architects of the European project need to decide whether the EU exists only to be a convenient marketplace for goods or whether it will seek to promote the common good of Europe and European values. They need to determine whether the EU’s purpose is only to defend consumer standards in the customs union or whether it will also fight for standards of human rights throughout an uncertain world.

If the EU persists in its inaction on the persecution in Xinjiang, it will serve as a confirmation that Europe has lost faith in its ability to champion two of its most fundamental principles: rules-based government and individual freedom. ■



NATO LIVES AS LONG AS WE ARE ALIVE

The French President is playing a dangerous game undermining well-established defence structures that continue to serve Europe well

The idea that NATO is “brain dead” is astonishing. In Europe and the United States, there is widespread surprise at the recent remarks by President Emmanuel Macron in which he expressed scepticism about the functioning of the allied security mechanism contained in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

Many analysts pointed out the inappropriate timing of Macron's remarks. We are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the end of the Cold War, which, unfortunately, is symbolised only by the fall of the Berlin Wall and not by the victory of the Polish Solidarity movement. We are also celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Atlantic Alliance this year.

Macron's opinions drew criticism from the Secretary-General of NATO, German politicians and the Polish Prime Minister. I expect more critical questions and opinions to be expressed at the NATO summit in London this week. Questions have even arisen about the state of mind of the French President.

It is worth recalling the basic facts and truths. Macron's low opinion of NATO is exaggerated, unfair and deeply damaging to European security, and especially to NATO's eastern flank countries that border Russia. Macron is probably trying to respond to Donald Trump's criticism of NATO some time ago, when he claimed that NATO failed to respond adequately to current security challenges. Trump criticised European countries for falling short of adequate financial contributions to defence.

Trump may have spoken clumsily, but he was quite correct. In contrast, Macron has no right to make such criticisms. Let us remember that at the 2014 NATO Summit, held in Wales, alliance members decided that they would spend at least 2% of GDP on defence budgets. Unfortunately, the majority of European countries still do not fulfil this obligation. So who can Macron blame for NATO's problems if not himself?

Nothing is perfect on this earth. NATO has had and still has its shortcomings. In the 1990s, the alliance was torn apart by numerous dilemmas. After 1989, after the end of the Cold War and during the “end of history” period, the *raison d'être* of the alliance

was debated. Many believed that with the disappearance of the enemy, the alliance's *raison d'être* had disappeared. They were nervous that NATO could not resolve any conflicts caused by the collapse of the communist bloc or crises caused by the so-called failed states in more distant regions. Critics even started to ridicule NATO as “No Action Talks Only”. This forced the development of the alliance's expeditionary mission and the enlargement process. In the 1990s, the alliance adapted to the post-Cold War reality. It welcomed new members. It proposed cooperation within the framework of the Partnership for Peace Programme to numerous neighbouring countries. In the following years, it introduced stabilisation efforts in far-flung corners of the world, such as in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, Paris was not a champion of those changes at the time.

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Statements by French politicians, diplomats and analysts are still dominated by the desire to strengthen European military initiatives, and not NATO. The European military initiatives are outside of NATO, for example in the European Intervention Initiative, PESCO or discussions about European strategic autonomy. It is reasonable to question, if we are dealing with the brain death of NATO, who is responsible for it? Who is not working to strengthen NATO?

In the 1990s and subsequent years, the alliance also devoted a lot of effort to the political ambitions of several European countries, particularly those of France. The aim was to create the possibility of using the resources and assets of the alliance for possible EU military operations. This was part of a European, mainly French, dream - fantasy? - of a European army.

Despite NATO's support, the European Union has still not managed to create a significant defence structure. Europe alone does not have many of the important elements in its armed forces for such operations, such as satellite monitoring or the ability to transport troops by air. During operations in Libya, the Franco-British forces ran out of ammunition after just a few days. The operation against Gaddafi's troops was finally successful when the Americans and the special forces of some Arab countries joined in. I do not recall Paris working to strengthen NATO in these years either.



by **Witold Waszczykowski MEP**

After 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and supported the rebellion in Donbas, NATO decided to establish itself militarily on the eastern flank. First, a decision was taken to create a marshal's troop that would reach the eastern edge of the alliance in the event of a military incident. In 2015, it was deemed insufficient and the NATO summit in Warsaw decided to deploy, among others, the allied battalion groups in Poland. The Americans returned to building a mis-

sile defence shield and decided to deploy an armoured brigade. The alliance did not stop there. Intensive work was done to support forces (Follow on Forces) in the event of a major conflict in the east. Logistical preparations, sometimes referred to as the NATO Schengen, are currently underway.

Paris does not block these activities, but they are also not French priorities. Paris has for years been trying to redirect Europe's attention to

the military operation in Mali. Indeed, there are strong terrorist structures there, cooperating with the so-called Islamic state (ISIS). However, many commentators see these measures as a means of securing French interests in former colonial areas.

Statements by French politicians, diplomats and analysts are still dominated by the desire to strengthen European military initiatives, and not NATO. The European military initiatives are outside of NATO, for example in the European Intervention Initiative, PESCO or discussions about European strategic autonomy. It is reasonable to question, if we are dealing with the brain death of NATO, who is responsible for it? Who is not working to strengthen NATO?

If Macron's opinion is the result of a sober analysis of NATO's weakness, is he really aiming to create an effective and credible European defence? France has all the resources to create



Photo: Getty Images

and implement such an initiative. It is a large European country with a strong economy and a strong defence industry. Finally, it is a nuclear power. I think that my country Poland would welcome an initiative to strengthen European security, which would complement the efforts of NATO and the US, without rivalry and duplication, of course.

But what if Macron's opinions are excuses and pretexts for Europe to emancipate itself from NATO and cooperation with the US? In this context, it is worth recalling other statements by the French President criticising EU enlargement, disreputing the conflict in Ukraine and suggesting that relations with Russia should be established on a business as usual basis. His concept crosses out all the security architecture that was created in Europe over the last three decades. The concept reconstructs a 19th-century concert of the powers. Let us hope that in his next interviews President Macron will present some rational arguments for his diversions about NATO.

From a Polish perspective, our security depends on NATO's security policy and close transatlantic cooperation. It depends on close cooperation with the US. It is not true

that it depends only on cooperation with Donald Trump. This American President has done a great deal for our security. However, let us remember the merits of other US presidents, including George Bush, Senior, who supported Poland's transformation through debt relief after communism. Remember Clinton's welcome when we and others joined NATO, and the merits of George W. Bush, and the anti-missile shield. Remember Barack Obama's decision to deploy an armoured brigade.

President Trump has implemented these earlier decisions and he is expanding our cooperation beyond the field of military security, in power engineering and technology.

From Warsaw's perspective, therefore, we do not see NATO or our transatlantic relationship dying. I hope that NATO will endure as long as we stick to our robust approach to European security. ■

Witold Waszczykowski MEP served as Foreign Minister of Poland from 2015-18.

This article was first published in Rzeczpospolita.



The EU must join the FIGHT AGAINST THE NEW COMMUNISM in the Balkans



by **Robin Harris**

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The West was too keen to proclaim that Communism was vanquished when the Wall came down in 1989. The Party chameleon merely changed its colours and new faces appeared. As Ryszard Legutko notes in *The Demon in Democracy*: “To this day, the former and present-day communists are under the protection of the European Union...”.

A popular meme in Croatia shows Donald Tusk telling Angela Merkel that he has entrusted the UK's withdrawal negotiations to Croatia, which occupies the EU Presidency next year. Appalled, Merkel puts a hand over her face: “The British will be f***ed with paper for ten years”, she groans. Croats are proud of their country, for which they shed their blood only twenty-five years ago, but they resent the incompetence, bureaucracy and endemic corruption they have to endure. This is the legacy of Communism, which is omnipresent.

The West was too keen to proclaim that Communism was vanquished, when the Wall came down in 1989. The Party chameleon merely changed its colours and new faces appeared. As Ryszard Legutko notes in *The Demon in Democracy*: “To this day, the former and present-day communists are under the protection of the European Union...”.

In Croatia Communism was never defeated. It was confronted in 1989/90, as in the rest of Eastern Europe, but once Serbia launched its war what mattered was not ideology but nationality. Croatia survived in part because most of the Croatian Communist Party, including most of the Secret Police, threw in their lot with President Franjo Tudjman. The top of the Party had anyway been

preparing for the break-up, salting away large sums abroad, and later those with the right connections – Party connections – salted away still more, through corrupt privatisation. Croatian Communists then joined both the main parties, Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

There was no lustation. Communists never confessed their misdeeds. It was a shock when in 2014 Germany demanded the extradition of Croatian agents responsible for the killing of a dissident in 1983, and their sentencing to life imprisonment in 2016 was a still greater shock. That did not, however, prompt any investigation of grievous Communist crimes committed within Croatia. The only party without Communists in its ranks – “Most” (The Bridge) – then part of a governing coalition with the HDZ – insisted, however, on the opening up of Communist Party and national security files. Shortly afterwards, not coincidentally, the HDZ broke with Most and formed a coalition with

is not brutal or corrupt. He could make a passable second order diplomat. But he is now Croatia's – and soon Britain's – problem. When Plenković was parachuted in from the European Parliament to take charge, some thought that he would reform the Party. But after a few confrontations with the Party's bosses, he concentrated on what really interested him – his ambition for a top job in the Commission. The EU was now the sole audience for which Croatian policy was devised. All he needed in Croatia was “stability”.

There was certainly some dissent. But the dissenters were crushed. Croatia in 2013 had held a referendum defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. This, as Plenković knew, was not the way to win friends in Europe. He resolved there would be no more. Initiatives for referenda on the Istanbul Convention and the voting system were stymied when the Government refused to admit the figures were correct. The Minister in charge, accused of corruption, later had to resign, but the decision stayed. Nor will any referendum be permitted on Croatia's planned entry into the euro.

Meanwhile, the rate of emigration has risen to catastrophic proportions. Some 350,000 Croats have left since 2013. These represent the most enterprising elements of the population. Yet their departure will cause the politicians no lost sleep. The independent-minded always pose a threat to statist. Their incomes are not needed anyway, because mass-tourism pays the taxes.

Keeping state employment large, regulation ubiquitous, intervention continuous, gives the political class the opportunity to exercise power and patronage. Parties in this quasi-communist system are not platforms for differing policies or opinions – as in

the Western mode – but rather competitors in the business of rewarding their supporters at every level and in every field of activity. That, in essence, is the post-communist model of the old Party-State.

Faithful to that model – and even as the EPP Congress was meeting in Zagreb on 20th November, with Plenković basking in the attention of Europe's leaders – the HDZ was conducting an internal purge. It was of Party members who in WhatsApp and Viber groups, i.e. private discussions, had criticised Plenković, Gordan Jandroković, the unpopular Party secretary, and Andrija Mikulić, the Zagreb Party boss appointed by Plenković to the new dangerously powerful post of chief inspector of businesses for the whole country. The victims were accused of “hate speech” and expelled without a hearing, thus flouting the Party's statutes. The refusal of the head of the Party appeal court to agree the expulsions has since held up proceedings, which are now likely to go before the civil courts. This, though, is probably just the first tranche of party expulsions designed to get rid of Plenković's toughest opponents as a preparation for party elections which are due by June 2020 – and which he looks like losing.

How Plenković finally behaves during the British withdrawal negotiations will depend on what he thinks will obtain for him the senior European post he craves. Previously, he declared that Brexit was just the result of “falsehoods, lies and disinformation”. But if Germany and France want the whole business finished – and if the Croatian side can shuffle those papers in the right order – he may cooperate.

More broadly, the encounters on Brexit should reinforce two conclusions in Britain. First, no organisation that entrusts Andrej Plenković with managing great international questions is sensibly arranged. Second, the EU, far from upholding good government in member countries, is prepared to overlook abuses, as long as those in charge uphold its ideology. Both show how right the British were to decide to leave. ■



by **Iain Martin**

government bonds “attract an interest rate” and they “attract a benefit.” The poor man seems never to have grappled with the notion before. Government debt is issued. It needs to attract buyers, who are influenced by all manner of factors, such as the trustworthiness of the sovereign and the brainpower or otherwise of those in charge of said state. He clearly has no sense of these debt dynamics.

No-one who has ever stood seeking to be Prime Minister of Britain has been so ill-equipped.

It is bad enough that the British Labour Party – once Atlanticist and a mainstream centre-left force – is now led by Marxists. Even worse, it is led by a virtue-signalling Marxist who is economically illiterate. ■

Jeremy Corbyn appears to be economically illiterate

During the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis it was commonplace to encounter senior financiers and members of boards of major financial firms in

the aftermath of 2008 I discovered I didn't know the half of it.

Leading politicians had a steep learning curve too in the immediate crisis period. The banks they had put

But no matter what reasonable differences of opinion one might have with individual politicians – such as former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who was in charge during the crisis in Britain – about the size of the state or the model they used to rescue the financial system, it was clear that these were generally intelligent people with a grasp of the basics.

Watching Jeremy Corbyn be interviewed during the British general election last week, I was hit with the horrible realisation that Labour's candidate to be Prime Minister is not just wrong. The man is economically illiterate.

Under pressure from the BBC's Andrew Neil, Corbyn was asked about

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It is bad enough that the British Labour Party – once Atlanticist and a mainstream centre-left force – is now led by Marxists. Even worse, it is led by a virtue-signalling Marxist who is economically illiterate

their faith in – as generators of growth and lovely tax receipts – had grown way too big and much too fast in manner that induced disaster. In the euro-zone the crisis took longer to unfold.

GERMANY IS MARCHING TOWARDS SOCIALISM

Europe’s largest economy is heading in an ever more left-wing direction thanks to the rise of the Greens and weak national leadership

by **Rainer Zitelmann**

When I published my book “The Power of Capitalism”, the most common objection raised in the ensuing discussion was that “everyone knows that capitalism is superior to socialism. Is there really anyone out there who wants socialism, a planned economy, or nationalisation programmes?” Because I had interpreted the signs differently, I wrote the book as a warning. I would have been happy to be wrong, but unfortunately the urgency of my warning is confirmed anew every day in Germany. Here are just two examples. Germany’s automotive industry is being restructured as a planned economy. Germany’s core industry is undergoing a major restructuring process – following in the footsteps of the country’s energy industry.

The mechanisms behind the transformation are the following: the EU has adopted the following targets for “fleet average emissions”: by 2021, newly registered cars in the EU will be only allowed to emit an average of 95g of CO2/km.

This is equivalent to average fuel consumption of 3.6 litres of diesel or 4.1 litres of gasoline per 100km. The proposals for the tightening of CO2 limits until 2030 include the following elements: CO2 emissions from new vehicles will be cut by a further 15% by 2025 and by a further 37.5% by 2030. The state is forcing companies to produce zero-emission/low-emission vehicles (typically in the form of electric cars). If more than 15% of the vehicles sold by a manufacturer in 2025 and more than 35% of the cars they sell in 2030 are zero or low-emission vehicles, the manufacturer will be rewarded with less stringent CO2 emission targets, consumption meters will be fitted to vehicles to monitor real-world CO2 emissions. The results will be published annually for each manufacturer.

In effect, this means that certain passenger cars – particularly smaller models – can no longer be produced. It is no longer companies and consumers who determine what is produced, but the state. But consumers have proved resistant – despite excessive subsidies – and have not been buying anywhere near enough electric

vehicles. It has become clear that Chancellor Angela Merkel is not going to achieve her target of having one million electric vehicles on Germany’s roads by 2020. As a result, car companies are now being forced to comply with government requirements rather than consumer wishes.

The second logical step is further massive state intervention in the economy. The German Economics Ministry, which was originally established as the watchdog of Germany’s free market economy, has since become a planned economy ministry.

As the economist Norbert F. Tonfall puts it: “Germany’s Chancellor does not seem to recognise the inherent contradiction in terms between the EU’s excessive environmental regulations for the car industry, coupled with her own government’s energy policy, which is committed to phasing out nuclear energy and coal, both of which are promoting long-term de-industrialization in Germany, and her government’s ‘National Industrial Strategy 2030’ on the other hand, which she and her Economics Minister have designed to achieve precisely the opposite. The presumptuous primacy of politics in one field seems to entail the primacy of politics in other fields. According to Ludwig von Mises, one could speak of a cross-sectoral spiral of intervention.”

Private property ownership is also being undermined, and nationalisation is being given a socially acceptable face.

Until very recently, demands for nationalisation in Germany were the exclusive preserve of Germany’s left-wing Die Linke party, Germany’s radical-socialist party, which was formerly known as the SED in communist East Germany and has since repeatedly rebranded itself.

Over the last couple of years, calls to nationalise key industries have become socially acceptable. Robert Habeck, chairman of Germany’s Green Party, which, according to opinion polls this year is now the second

strongest party in Germany (behind Angela Merkel’s CDU) and by far the strongest party in the capital Berlin, has declared that it could well become necessary to nationalise privately owned property. Some of Germany’s leading journalists have also spoken out in favor of nationalisation programmes, and opinion polls in the capital Berlin have also registered majorities in favour of such measures.

State interventions in the housing industry are becoming increasingly drastic. The government introduced its rent controls, the so-called “rent brake,” as early as 2015. The rent brake swept away the contractual freedoms that had previously existed between landlords and new tenants in existing residential buildings. In areas with “overheated housing markets” (and this includes virtually every major city in the country), the

wrong direction. Germany’s centre-left party, the SPD, which serves as the junior coalition partner in government with Angela Merkel’s CDU party, is already calling for the country’s rent controls to be tightened yet again. The party has called for a “rent freeze.” And in Berlin, the SPD has proposed a rent limit of euro 6.00-7.00/sqm as an alternative to the expropriation of housing companies.

At the same time, the capital Berlin, which is ruled by a tripartite coalition of SPD, Die Linke and the Greens, is increasingly overrun by so-called “neighbourhood protection zones.” In such areas, it is no longer property owners who decide on which structural changes to make to their buildings, but the state. For example, an apartment owner was blocked from extending an 80-cm-wide bathroom because the authorities decided that 80 centimetres is in keeping with a “con-

temporary standard of housing.” And, when real estate is sold, the state is increasingly taking advantage of its legal right of first refusal – and not only in Berlin, but also in Munich and other major cities. The authorities regularly intimidate sellers by claiming that the state will step in as a buyer whenever a sale is imminent. The only way for a real estate owner to avoid this is by signing over many of their rights to self-determination to the authorities. For example, the strict terms of such agreements mean that landlords are no longer allowed to partition their property into condominiums.

Of course, none of these measures do anything to eliminate the real causes of the housing shortage. Nor do they create a single new dwelling. One of the prime causes of Germany’s housing crisis is that

rent charged for new rentals in existing apartments may not be more than 10 percent above the “local comparative rent” (or the rent paid by the previous tenant).

However, this law has not been able to overcome the natural market mechanisms of supply and demand. Because the supply of housing in Germany’s largest cities falls well short of satisfying the intense demand created by expanding populations, rents have kept on climbing. For anyone who accepts the logic of state intervention, it is clear that the regulatory screw needs to be tightened even more.

On January 1st earlier this year, a more stringent version of the rent brake was enacted. It seems as if politicians, having realised that they will not reach their goals by following their chosen path, have simply decided to run even faster – in the



Photo: Xander Hani - Getty Images

The Topeka School by Ben Lerner

How Ben Lerner brought poetry to the page

by **Will Hutton**

A short way into Ben Lerner’s new novel, *The Topeka School*, Jonathan, a therapist at the Topeka “Foundation”, and one of the novel’s narrators, is wandering the medieval art galleries of the Met when he happens upon Duccio’s *Madonna and Child* and experiences something that has long eluded characters in Lerner novels. Jonathan has a profound experience of art.

“Old paintings usually bored me; this one stopped me cold. The knowledge in the woman’s expression, as though she could anticipate a distant recurrence. The weird parapet beneath the figures, how it linked the scared world with the world of viewers. But what really fascinated me, really moved me, wasn’t in the painting: it was how the bottom edge of the original frame was marked by candle burns. Traces of an older illumination, the shadow of devotion.”

A decorated poet with three collections under his belt, Lerner has said

that he turns to fiction to write about art in order to create something in response to experiencing something else: the *frame* of professional criticism too restrictive for his evident creative talents. But art criticism is far from the only *frame* Lerner seeks to disturb in his novels; not least in

“*The Topeka School* is, then, a bildungsroman of two very different boys: one, Adam, whose loquacity is instrumental to his flowering; the other, Darren, whose wordlessness weaponizes him. *The Topeka School* is about the failure of language, and the violence of its absence in a culture of diminishing systems of value.

The Topeka School, a novel which, like Jonathan’s reaction to Duccio’s *Madonna and Child*, is as interested in the traces of illumination below the painting as the painting itself.

The Topeka School centres on Adam Gordon, the twentysomething narrator of Lerner’s first novel, *Leaving*

the Atocha Station. The Madrid cafés and louche Spanish poets of that first book are traded in for “the chicken hawk atop the telephone poll, the man-child with a flare gun tucked into his sweat pants, the finger lost to snapping turtle or firework”. This is Kansas, ‘97. Adam is still in high school juggling the anxiety of a forthcoming national debating championship that everyone touts him to win, and the pressure of a demanding social life with the Jasons, and Codys, and Seans of Topeka High who seem to subsist on a diet entirely of protein powder and hash.

To this mélange we add Adam’s parents, Jonathan (see above) and Jane, also a therapist at the Foundation who, like Lerner’s actual mother, is a celebrated author of best-selling psychology books who has been interviewed on *Oprah*. Adam’s parents, as therapists and as therapists at the Foundation, establish the analytical framework by which Lerner interrogates his subjects. *The Topeka School* is an aetiology of a therapeutic culture represented by Jane and Jonathan, who says: “We thought that if we had a language for our feelings we might transcend

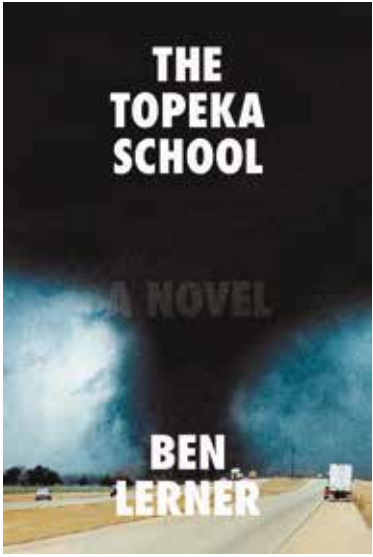
them. More often we fed them.” Lerner’s novel is in this way charged with the anxiety over the value of language, both literal – a novel is, after all, nothing but language printed on a page – and metaphorical. Lerner finds the best expression of language-as-metaphor in the

“spread”: a form of logorrheic debate wherein the debater throws more arguments at their opponent than can reasonably be answered; in missing an argument, a point is conceded to the opposition. It’s a strategy with which Adam in his debating competitions has considerable talent, and a frame which Lerner uses to trace the disintegration of meaningful discourse, both public and political: “Even before the twenty-four-hour news cycle, Twitter storms, algorithmic trading, spreadsheets, the DDoS attack, Americans were getting “spread” in their daily lives; meanwhile, their politicians went on speaking slowly, slowly about values utterly disconnected from their policies.”

In a novel full of voices, however, one is noticeably absent: the voice of Darren Eberheart, an autistic boy brought into the fold of Adam’s masculine friendship group. The passages about Darren are some of the best sustained writing Lerner commits to the book. We’re guided through Darren’s perspective in a defamiliarizing third person register in which the outcast never actually speaks. Lerner writes: “realizing the party had broken up just as they were coaxing him into the back of a Jeep Cherokee, Nowak driving, Laura riding shotgun, see the cherry of her Marlboro Light,

Davis beside him in the back, proffering a bottle of Mad Dog 20/20 Coco Loco wine, the bass of what Nowak called his system rattling Darren’s chest, all eyes on me.” This assemblage of fragmented clauses captures the way in which drink and drugs mash up time and Darren’s disorientation in a milieu whose acceptance he has long craved and, now having it, seems unsure how to navigate.

The Topeka School is, then, a bildungsroman of two very different



boys: one, Adam, whose loquacity is instrumental to his flowering; the other, Darren, whose wordlessness weaponizes him. *The Topeka School* is about the failure of language, and the violence of its absence in a culture of diminishing systems of value.

In a recent talk at Tate Britain, Lerner told the audience that, for him, poetry was all about pat-

ternity. And traces of this older devotion are evident here. Lerner patterns a plot out of person, perspective and language, where phrases from one voice, in one part of the book, appear in another. “Everything,” as Jane says late in this complex work, is “a network of criss-crossing relations.” In less talented hands these tricks in voice and perspective would be gimmicks. But in Ben Lerner’s careful hands, they bring poetry to the page. ■

The Secret Commonwealth by Philip Pullman

Wonderful fantasies of the imagination

by **Alexander Larman**

There are at least as many tour guides in Oxford as there are colleges. Virtually every kind of introduction to the city is offered via the medium of enthusiastic hustlers whose patter would do credit to a Middle Eastern souk. Yet nobody offers a less nostalgic tour, which has as much to say about present-day Oxford, and the rest of England, as it does about any fanciful and sanitised version of it, than Philip Pullman.

This would be a trip into the world of *His Dark Materials*, his series of novels that have transformed from a trilogy into, currently, a quintet with the publication of *The Secret Commonwealth*, one of the most anticipated novels of the year.

Pullman is currently Oxford’s most famous living author, the bearer of a torch that has passed from Carroll, Tolkien and CS Lewis to him. He is a mild-mannered, donnish presence in person, reserving his vitriol for social media, where he rails against Brexit, Boris Johnson and all that he sees as

false and corrupt in today’s society. Much of this anger has been channelled into his books, which set its central protagonist Lyra Belacqua and her allies against a totalitarian institution known as The Magisterium, a

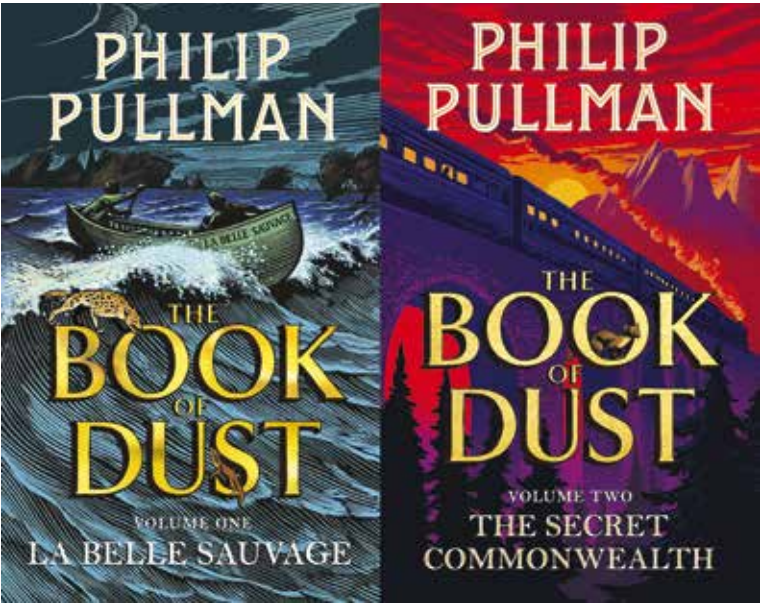
fictionalised version of the Catholic Church.

Aficionados of the series probably think they know what is in the latest instalment. They may be wrong. Pullman took a significant break between the publication of *The Amber Spyglass* in 2000 and the return to Lyra’s world in *La Belle Sauvage*, a prequel to the series, in 2017, but *The Secret Commonwealth* is the first true sequel to the eschatological events depicted in the original trilogy.

Lyra is 20 years old in *The Secret Commonwealth*, and far removed from the sprite-like heroine of the original trilogy. She is estranged from her daemon Pantalaimon and is in thrall to the modish moral philosopher Simon Talbot, whose central argument is that objective reality does not exist. Experience has hardened her, removing the *joie de vivre* that was so integral to her character in the original trilogy. Many of the characters from the earlier books return, but they are older, shabbier and more frightened. The Magisterium has recovered from the defeat of the Metatron

to once again dominate society. Its major opposition is Oakley Street, an underfunded secret service of sorts so poor that its directors have to travel between clandestine meetings on third-class rail tickets.

It is not too seismic a spoiler to reveal that Lyra, Pantalaimon and Malcolm Polstead, the now grown-up protagonist of *La Belle Sauvage*, face a foe more implacable than ever before. The Magisterium is every bit as malevolent, but then so is Talbot’s bland emptiness, as his charm and witticisms fail to conceal an entirely hollow and mendacious fraud. Pullman cites John Milton – whose *Paradise Lost* gave *His Dark Materials* its title – as a great influence, and it is hard not to think of the oleaginous demon Belial in the second book of his epic poem.



The Secret Commonwealth is a tough book, lengthy (well over 700 pages) and with distinctly grown-up themes. Lyra is much harder to like than her earlier incarnation, and many will miss some of the first trilogy’s indelible characters – although, who knows, they may yet return in some sphere or other. Works of this nature manage to bend traditional rules of time and space, to thrilling effect. Yet it is still a true fantasia of imagination. Pullman has a unique knack for creating worlds that enthrall as much as they can terrify, and this new and often challenging voyage into the great, unknowable world of “Brytain” is a compelling and fascinating read. It will undoubtedly sell in huge quantities, and it richly deserves to. ■



In its new winter exhibition, which opened in November, the British Museum has set itself a big challenge. Its subject is a war that may not have happened, made famous by a man who may never have existed. But, as the first room of the exhibition hints, *Troy: myth and reality* is not really about the archaeology of the famous city which was continuously inhabited for nearly four thousand years. There, two small, fire-damaged pots found during the excavation of the city are dwarfed by Cy Twombly's vicious *Vengeance of Achilles* and a sombre installation by Anthony Caro. The show's emphasis is on the art inspired by the stories of the Trojan War, most famously those in the Iliad and Odyssey, which we ascribe to a blind man we call Homer.

The man who found those blackened pots was Heinrich Schliemann, the German businessman who directed an obsessive hunt for evidence to corroborate the Homeric legend from 1871. In October that year he began hacking a dual-carriageway-wide gash through the mound at Hisarlik at the mouth of the Dardanelles, which was thought – correctly, as I'll come on to explain – to be the likely site of ancient Troy. A clash between the Greeks and Trojans, if it happened, most probably took place during the thirteenth century BC. In 1873, having burrowed at least a thousand years deeper, Schliemann spirited away a collection of gold, silver and bronze finds that he then dubbed “King Priam’s Treasure” all the same. Having exhibited these artefacts for a time in London, he ultimately gave them, and other finds including the two pots that start this exhibition, to a museum in Berlin. It was there the

pots acquired their current look, when they were damaged by fire caused by bombing in 1945. The gold in Priam's Treasure was seized by the Russians, who refuse to lend it, presumably because they fear they will not get it back. But, thanks to the Berlin museums, the rest of the treasure is now on display in London for the first time in over 140 years.

The epic, repetitive stories about the Trojan War belong to an oral tradition that developed after writing was abandoned amid a period of prolonged instability which began about 1175 BC. Whether Homer was one man or many is debatable. But the versions we now credit him with composing crystallised once stability returned to the eastern Mediterranean and writing re-emerged. The exhibition includes an amusing item that nails down when this was. A humble, rustic pottery cup from the Italian island of Ischia, which dates to c. 715BC, bears a humorous reference implying it is Nestor's cup – a vessel which, according to the Iliad, was made of gold and too heavy for other men to lift. While we're on the subject of drinking, another wry piece stood out. Eris, the goddess of discord who was supposed to have started the conflict, is finely depicted on the interior of one wine cup, so that she would have emerged once the drinker had sunk the two pints of wine it would have comfortably contained.

The Iliad and the Odyssey resonated because, as the curators say, they dealt with timeless and

by **James Barr**



The Iliad and the Odyssey resonated because, as the curators say, they dealt with timeless and universal themes: of heroism and violence, love and loss, hope and despair. Their depiction of prick-driven statesmanship certainly has a modern ring.

and Guildenstern into the stars of a play in their own right, Aeschylus' and Euripides' fleshing out of parts of the Homeric story in turn created fashions and demand that other artists then met. Lots of their work is on display, and the Museum has again effectively used light displays to help visitors disentangle the complex images and work out who is who. It has also pulled some magnificent sarcophagi out of storage, and borrowed frescoes from elsewhere. God knows what Ephesus's coffin carvers would have done without Homer, nor for that matter the interior decorators of Pompeii.

The Greco-Persian wars of the fifth century BC gave Homer's stories of war, bereavement and uncertainty for those the soldiers left behind at home renewed relevance. These wars also did something else. What had once been a morality tale from which no one emerged unscathed now acquired the more chauvinistic flavour of a battle between the barbaric east and civilised west. Greek artists gave Paris, the Trojan prince, clothes that made clear that he was Persian.

Another reason why the Iliad, the Odyssey and their spin-offs became so important was because they became central to the creation myths of Greece and Rome, and then of our own cultures. In England, Geoffrey of Monmouth in the eleventh century claimed that the ancient Britons were descendants of Brutus, grandson of the Trojan refugee Aeneas. Three fascinating artefacts in the exhibition show how the story spread. Two silver cups found in the grave of a Danish chieftain who lived two thousand years ago depict Homeric stories. One shows Priam begging Achilles to return the body of Hector, his dead son. A Gandharan relief, which probably comes from Pakistan, shows an unmistakable Trojan horse.

The Homeric versions of the story emerged at least four hundred years after the most likely date of the events that they describe. Imagine depending on Alice Oswald for our knowledge of the Thirty Years' War. That invites the question that drove Schliemann:

is any of it actually true? Two easily-overlooked objects offer a tantalising possibility that there is some basis in fact. A four-inch-long clay tablet covered in dense cuneiform writing is a fragment of a thirteenth century treaty between the Hittites – the major power to the east of Troy and a ruler called Alaksandu of Wilusa. The Iliad also calls Paris Alexander. So where was Wilusa? The second item helps clear that up – the seal of King Tarkasnawa of Mira. It provides a text in both cuneiform and Hittite hieroglyphs, which enabled the deciphering of a boundary marker in western Turkey, which places Wilusa to the north, where Troy is. In other words, there was a prince called Alexander ruling the Troy area, at the most likely time when a clash between the Mycenaeans and the Trojans could have happened.

In terms of space, the second half of the exhibition deals with the reception of the Troy myth ever since: there are medieval manuscripts, early printed books and plenty of Renaissance and Victorian paintings, if you enjoy that sort of thing. A truly alarming portrait of a furious Clytemnestra just after murdering her husband, and a tender sculpture of Thetis dipping Achilles in the River Styx stand out. But – judging by the difference between the densely packed first half of the exhibition and this relatively empty runway to the exit, the modern interpretations are not what the visitors have come to see.

And there, I feel, lies the problem with this exhibition. As its title suggests, it will encourage visitors to expect an answer to their most likely question: is the Troy Story true? There is lots here that is fascinating but I left feeling somewhat underwhelmed. ■



Who Owns History? Elgin's Loot and the Case for Returning Plundered Treasure *by Geoffrey Robertson*

WHO OWNS HERITAGE?

by **Ivan Macquisten**

Cultural patrimony is a complex question. Owners of stolen cultural heritage should not be held responsible for historical wrongdoing

Distinguished lawyer Geoffrey Robertson's new book *Who Owns History? Elgin's Loot and the Case for Returning Plundered Treasure* makes a spirited case for restoring cultural property to its country of origin. He attacks “rich collectors and grasping missionaries” for keeping “property they know to have been stolen in earlier times”. It's a superficially compelling argument and one with which many might agree, partly because it chimes with contemporary fashions and partly because it has the ring of truth – if heritage has been consciously looted or stolen, shouldn't it be returned to its former owners?

Well, it's a little bit more complex than that. In some cases, the origins of artefacts in private hands can be traced; in most they cannot. Even if an item of local heritage value was acquired from its source country under dubious circumstances – either illicitly, legally, or even immorally – long, long ago, it's difficult to blame its present owners for buying it on above the board terms.

The situation is further complicated by the frank willingness in the past for source countries to merrily trade away their ancient treasures as a means of raising foreign revenues. Egypt, perhaps the most vociferous nation in its current demands for the return of antiquities, licensed more than a hundred dealers in the 19th and 20th century, selling and exporting artefacts in the hundreds of thousands. It even had a saleroom in the Cairo Museum and only finally banned the sale and export of its ancient art in 1983, eleven years after the UNESCO Convention aimed at protecting cultural patrimony came into force.

Furthermore, the documentation for these ancient artefacts is usually missing. Countries of origin often had no export licensing system when items were exported originally and even where they did have export licences, requirements rarely demanded detailed invoices and certainly not to the standards required

“Egypt, perhaps the most vociferous nation in its current demands for the return of antiquities, licensed more than a hundred dealers in the 19th and 20th century, selling and exporting artefacts in the hundreds of thousands. It even had a saleroom in the Cairo Museum and only finally banned the sale and export of its ancient art in 1983, eleven years after the UNESCO Convention aimed at protecting cultural patrimony came into force.

Pressed by Egypt, only last month UNESCO moved a step closer to reversing the burden of proof in favour of countries of origin over its present owners. Many countries, academics, archaeologists and NGOs are also keen for this to happen. But that doesn't seem just given the bureaucratic mess that has accumulated since these objects were first traded away or looted.

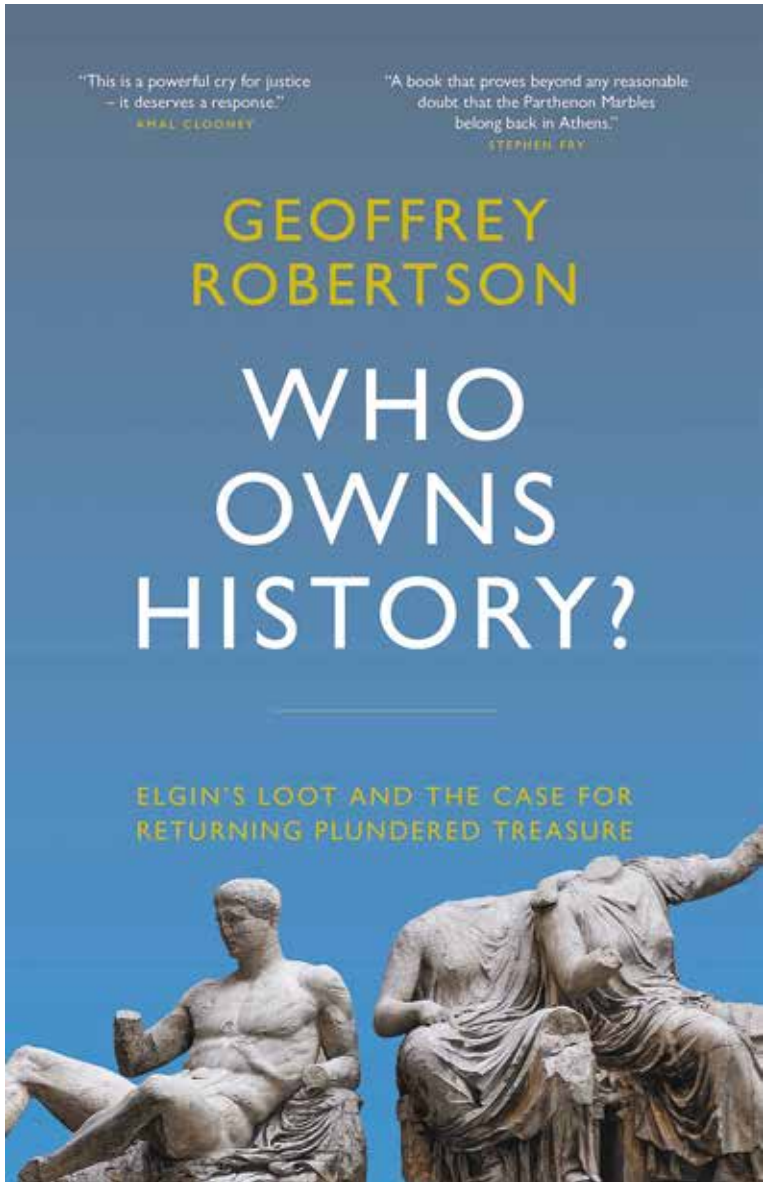
Indeed, Geoffrey Robertson supports that view drawing on a modern, liberal notion that “human rights treaties [that] insist on our entitlement to enjoy culture”. He has a point, but of at least equal importance is the right to enjoy one's personal property without being deprived of it or its value arbitrarily. This is a right enshrined as one of the five basic rights in the United Nations Universal Declaration Convention of Human Rights (Article 17). It is a priority of the Fourth and Fifth Amendments of the United States Constitution, a major consideration of Chapter 39 of Magna Carta and a cornerstone of the English Bill of Rights (1689).

Seizing someone's property because they don't have the right paperwork back to the year dot, without being able to show that it was come by illegally, is surely arbitrary. Where is the public outcry about this? And where is it from Robertson – a renowned human rights lawyer?

To put this in context, how many of us, if challenged, would be able to provide detailed documentation to prove that we have acquired all the personal possessions we keep at home legally, and a proof of an ownership trail going back to the original manufacture? Because this is what reversing the burden of proof means in practice.



Photo: Elizabeth Almut



Robertson does issue a number of caveats when it comes to returning the “loot”. Yes to the Koh-i-Noor diamond (a forced “gift” to Queen Victoria) and the Elgin Marbles (hacked off the Parthenon under the eyes of bribed officials), but no to the Rosetta Stone (“an abandoned piece of granite until its hieroglyphics were deciphered by French and British scientists after it was deposited in the British Museum, where for that reason it should stay”).

He also argues that sometimes prevailing rights in “cultural property” can belong to those who are not from the source country, citing a London tombstone for Australia's first Aboriginal expatriate, Yemmerrawanne, brought to Britain in 1793.

“Cultural property should belong to the nation to whose people it means the most,” he argues.

But who is to judge this? Robertson himself? A collection of Western politicians and academics? Doesn't this all rather smack of the sort of patronising neo-colonialism that modern restitution policy is supposed to eschew? And how do you measure such comparative importance to different peoples?

“The right to restitution should also be denied to states that plan to use the artefacts for the propagation of false history,” he adds. But how do you know that will happen unless you have already returned them? And what right do you have to rule that this might be a risk that outweighs the claim of the source state?

“For items of universal importance, such as the Marbles and the Rosetta stone, the question should turn on

where they can best be studied and appreciated – the former, obviously, in the New Acropolis museum dedicated to their story, but the latter should stay in the British Museum where it has been deciphered and remains the most popular exhibit.”

Again, a decision based on a Western perspective. Tell that to the Egyptians and see what they say about your right to decide this.

A frequent cry of those seeking restitution is that a nation's cultural property is of global importance and so should not be held privately or individually. But if its global significance is to take precedence, why is it so important that it moves from one country to another?

Robertson's book is an important reference in the debate over patrimony, restitution and justice and he has an outstanding record for championing human rights. But adopting a moral absolutist stance in addressing this issue also serves to expose where those arguments are at their weakest, as well as the danger of inadvertently abandoning one set of basic human rights in favour of another.

This failure to protect individual human rights in the pursuit of cultural heritage protection and restitution is commonplace among governments, NGOs and others, and it needs to be addressed urgently. ■

Ivan Macquisten is an art market campaigner and adviser to trade associations, including the Antiquities Dealers' Association (ADA) and the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art (IADAA).



An odd reflection to have at the start of a weekend dedicated to Benjamin Britten's Russian influences at Snape Maltings, home to the world-renowned Aldeburgh Festival, but Benjamin Britten disliked a lot of Russian music (Rachmaninov, Borodin, Mussorgsky) and quite a few Russian composers personally, notably, Stravinsky, though he was a great admirer of Tchaikovsky and later of Shostakovich. What is sometimes overlooked as well is that he had something of a soft spot for Soviet Russia until surprisingly late in the day.

Over two beautifully sunny days on the edges of the Alde river in Suffolk, such ambivalences did not stop me enjoying the music of composers as varied as Prokofiev (*Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova* sung by a very full voiced Julia Sitkovetsky accompanied by Roger Vignoles) and Rachmaninov (*Six Romances*, again sung by Sitkovetsky, and his lush Third Symphony played by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Jac van Steen). But in volume and sheer musical quality, the weekend – held over the 19th and 20th of October – was unsurprisingly dominated by works by Britten and Shostakovich. Indeed the whole programme of concerts revolved thematically around just three men and one woman: Britten's relationship with the Russian cellist Slava Rostropovich, and to a lesser extent his wife the singer Galina Vishnevskaya, and with the musical titan of Soviet Russia, Dmitri Shostakovich.

Key to these relationships was a concert in London in 1960 – re-enacted

at Snape last month – which a reluctant Britten was persuaded to attend because the celebrated Russian cellist was to play Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra. Britten was entranced by Rostropovich's incredibly skilful playing and made this clear to Shostakovich by constantly nudging him in his ribs (they were seated together in a concert hall box) to indicate the passages he most admired. A triangular friendship was born that evening that would survive until their deaths.

The triangle was not only about music but also about Soviet Russia, the crossing point of these extraordinary personalities and talents. It was entirely appropriate therefore that the first symphonic concert of the weekend, under the skilled direction of van Steen and the vibrant playing of the Welsh Orchestra, should have opened with a very short but historically resonant piece, *Russian Funeral*, written by Britten in 1936 and originally performed at a London Labour Union concert to mark the resistance to Fascism shown under the Spanish Republic. Britten was then firmly on the left politically, still sympathetic to the "Soviet experiment" notwithstanding Stalin's show trials and far removed from his eventual evolution into a conservative establishment figure, Lord Britten, OM, etc.

For Shostakovich life in the 1930s and later was more constrained and more frightening as he sought to find a way to retain musical integrity while tacking to the cultural demands of the pre- and post-war Soviet Union. Not until 1953 and Stalin's death did something of a "thaw" emerge and even then only temporarily. The youngest of the three men, Rostropovich, had not himself known the privations of the 1930s, but his turn would come under the more benign but still dictatorial rule of Khrushchev and Brezhnev.

After *Russian Funeral* we had a kind of Russian renaissance in the Maltings concert hall with a performance of Shostakovich's 10th Symphony, the first fruit of the 1953 "thaw". The Welsh Orchestra gave it their all, as those unable to attend the concert can hear in the Radio 3 recording broadcast subsequently, especially in the stunning rhythmic

push of the second movement. Most commentators now see the 10th as the final fruit of Shostakovich's trilogy of war symphonies (the 7th, 8th and 9th). The Second World War was a point of intense, echoing, resonance for Shostakovich, an acute admirer of Britten's *War Requiem* which he rated higher than Mozart's *Requiem in D minor*: Shostakovich, a musical patriot under duress at the siege of Leningrad; Britten, a pacifist patriot returning from the US to wartime England.

But in the autumnal quietness of Snape the lynchpin drawing Britten, Shostakovich and Rostropovich together was the cello. Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto – the other product of 1953 – was given vital new life by the brilliant young cellist, Laura van der Heijden who, improbably, graduated from Cambridge only this year. Her slight frame seemingly designed solely to give support to her strongly deployed fingers, she sat beside the overwhelming bulk of the conductor, confident and supremely rhythmic. But the glories of the cello didn't stop there: we were blessed with a second wonderful and more established cellist in the form of Alban Gerhardt, who, in a second weekend concert, delivered a performance of Britten's Symphony for Cello and Orchestra that would surely have pleased Rostropovich as much as

Britten. Gerhardt showed enormous skill and subtlety in stunning solo performances also of Britten's First and Third Cello Suites. I will not easily or willingly forget his rendering of the final passages of the Passacaglia of the Third Suite.

In their last years each member of the Russian triangle gave support in one way or another to the others. Britten on a final visit to Moscow required the Soviet authorities to allow Rostropovich to play Shostakovich's music, at a time when both men were out of favour with Brezhnev and his gang, as a condition for his visit. Rostropovich in turn teased more works for cello out of Britten, and, after his exile, a result of his open support for Alexander Solzhenitsyn, became his fast friend in Aldeburgh where he frequently performed for him. Shostakovich – though less politically courageous than his fellow Russian – always championed Britten's music in Russia, even when relations between the Soviet Union and the UK were most troubled.

And perhaps Britten, his admiration for the "Soviet experiment" having faded, though even in 1968 he refused to publicly condemn the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, had managed through his friendships with Shostakovich and Rostropovich to see more clearly the true nature of Soviet Russia, with eyes unvarnished by the idealism or naivety of the 1930s. Certainly it seemed so as we listened to the rich musical fruits of the triangle formed in 1960 and performed amid the swaying reed beds on the Suffolk coast. ■



The Irishman

is a worthy coda to Scorsese's gangster genre

This elegiac epic shows Scorsese on top form

by Will Hutton

What happens when you grow old? That's the question lingering in the nursing home in which Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran (Robert DeNiro) sees out his days rather like Uncle Junior did at the end of *The Sopranos*; though don't expect any after-hour gambling dens where patients' buttons sub for chips and the only illicit items smuggled in are cans of pop.

From his wheelchair and IV drip, Frank recalls his heady past entanglements with the Bufalino crime family, much like the lone octogenarian you see mumbling to himself on visits to your grandma. Of no less importance in the old man's recollections is the name Jimmy Hoffa (Al Pacino); unknown to the nurses on the ward, but there was a time – boy was there a time – when everyone in America knew the name HOFFA: President of the Teamster Union, and thought, for a time at least, to have a good chance of being the next U.S. President. And so, in flash backs, voice over, tracking shots, period music, and breaks of the fourth wall – the tricks Scorsese has perfected over his long and singular career – *The Irishman* unspools over three and a half hours with the pace and tension of watching the elderly run for the bus.

To combat the savageries of age – DeNiro being four years shy of eighty (let's all pause to let that sink in...) – much hoo-ha has been made of the

de-aging technology that allows the film's central cast of old timers play much younger versions of themselves; or much-much-younger-versions of themselves in the case of DeNiro, who we flash back to behind the wheel of a meat packing truck: Brill-creamed black hair, hardly a wrinkle in sight. For the most part, the tech works. Not since *Boyhood* has aging been put to such compelling effect in a film – and in *Boyhood* the aging was real. But what technology can hide, the mortal body reveals. In one scene, we see young hitman Frank discard his firearms on the seafloor only to creak stiffly back across the rugged shingle to his car. You can't help but wonder with what verve these earlier scenes – where we spend most of the film – would have played out with had its cast been five... ten... years younger. Remember Johnny Boy prowling into *Mean Streets* to the sound of Jumpin' Jack Flash? Or Joe Pesci, leaving retirement for the film, in... *anything*? Such volatility in previous flicks gives way to solemnity here.

But perhaps that's the point. This isn't 1973, or 1981, or 1990 when *Goodfellas* was released. This is 2019: when not a stone in the crime genre has been left unturned. *The Irishman* doesn't do anything we haven't seen before: wise guys get whacked, officials get bribed. But as a late edition to a genre its director has helped to define; in the



film's unique gathering of talents, *The Irishman* is less a greatest hits album than some kind of coda, sombre and severe, of an oeuvre we didn't realise we needed but which, now before us,

is utterly essential to our mythopoeia. What happens when you grow old? For a gangster like Frank, alone in the nursing home, you find out you're just like everybody else. ■

The Good Liar

– literate and entertaining but too many twists

What this film lacks in substance it makes up for in the quality of its star leads – Iain McKellen and Helen Mirren

by Alexander Larman

At a time when jaded cinema-goers are tantalised with all manner of tempting-sounding crossovers between film franchises, there is a certain pleasing simplicity to the central offering of *The Good Liar*, the latest film from Bill Condon. It is the first pairing of the legendary Ian McKellen and the equally celebrated Helen Mirren, thespian royalty who have somehow never before collaborated together, whether on screen or on stage. While it is tempting to bemoan what might have been – their *Macbeth* would have been brilliant, but then so would their *Private Lives* or *Dance of Death* – this adaptation of Nicholas Searle's 2016 novel at last unites them. But does it justify such anticipation?

At first glance, the film resembles a slightly updated version of the kind of Hitchcockian entertainments that were in such demand in the Fifties

Roy Courtney (McKellen) is a successful but ageing con-man, tiring, along with his partner in crime Vince (Jim Carter), of small scores that bring in the tens of thousands, rather than the millions. What he wants is a spectacular "last job", presumably that he can retire on, and as the film begins, he has found his "mark" in the form of Betty McLeish, a former Oxford don who is in poor health thanks to a series of strokes.

that bring in the tens of thousands, rather than the millions. What he wants is a spectacular "last job", presumably that he can retire on, and as the film begins, he has found his "mark" in the form of Betty McLeish, a former Oxford don who is in poor health thanks to a series of strokes. Courtney rubs his hands together in figurative glee, and sets about insinuating himself into Betty's life, much to the horror and disdain of her protective grandson Steven (Russell Tovey). To Betty, Russell seems a decent and caring sort, if not without his eccentricities. But is she the full shilling as well?

To discuss plot specifics would be to spoil the storyline's myriad twists, some of which are guessable and some of which are not. It is easy to see how the film might have been made a generation ago, with Trevor Howard and Celia Johnson in the roles so ably played by McKellen and Mirren, but it is also likely that the film would have been considerably lower on the swearing and violence that, at times, incongruously intrude upon the carefully written and acted game of wits that the lead actors engage in.

Make no mistake, *The Good Liar* is worth seeing for the two stars alone. As Courtney, McKellen delivers the rumpled charisma and charm that he has

specialised in throughout his latter-day career, cut through with something nastier and more feral when it has to be. (A scene on the London Underground, as he disposes of an intrusive mark, has a particular kick to it.) Mirren, meanwhile, has a trickier role to play, as this fine and intelligent actor has to convey an almost passive sense of gullibility for most of the first two acts, until her own motivations and intentions become clear.

Condon's film is fine, literate entertainment, but some of the more outrageous revelations do beggar belief. Without wishing to give too much away, two extended flashbacks reveal that the film is working in an entirely different register to what one might initially imagine it is, and while the

first is convincingly brutal and psychologically intriguing, the second is heavy-handed and raises questions that are never entirely answered by the final twists. The director is responsible for some excellent films (*Kinsey*, *Gods and Monsters*) and some dreadful ones (*The Fifth Estate*, *Twilight: Breaking Dawn*), which reveals an entertainingly haphazard attitude towards his career choices. This, thankfully, is closer to the former category, but there are irritations throughout, not least Tovey's character, a two-dimensional bleater whose main plot function is to keep telling his grandmother that she is making a mistake, at least until the final revelations make his actions even more perplexing. But there are compensations, too, not least Carter in a scuzzy role, complete with excellent hair, that could not be further from his paternal butler in *Downton Abbey*.

Perhaps this will represent the beginning of a beautiful friendship between McKellen and Mirren and many subsequent collaborations. Certainly, both of them relish the well-written (by playwright Jeffrey Hatcher) script and the opportunity to move beyond showy cameos into two dynamic lead roles. It would be stretching the point to argue that *The Good Liar* is great cinema but it reflects the novel that it is based on; literate, enjoyable adult entertainment, with great actors giving it their all, and an unexpectedly thoughtfully undercurrent that lingers longer than all the scenes of violence by, and towards, characters well into pensionable age. ■





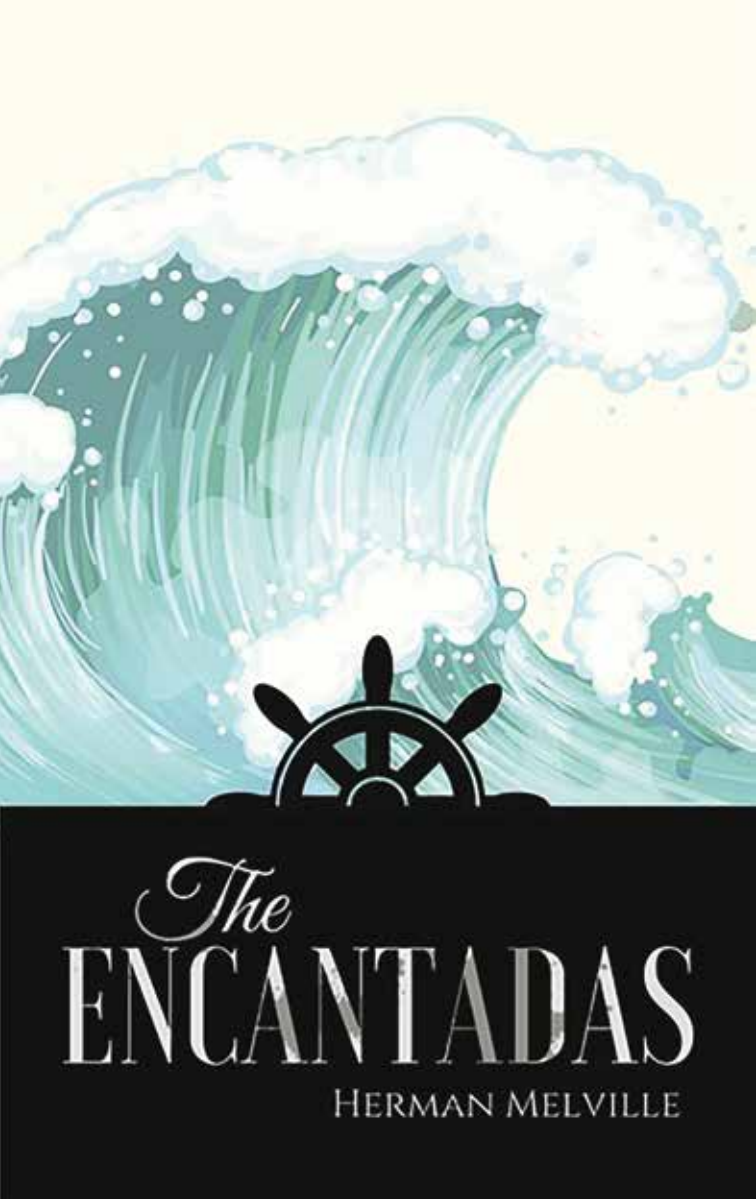
The Encantadas

by Herman Melville

Lost Classic is the series in which we highlight great works that are under-appreciated or forgotten

The few tales Herman Melville told of the land never lose the whiff of brine. Indeed, the author of *Moby-Dick* was moulded by the sea. It became a reference point for his complex, hot-tempered “tornadoed Atlantic” soul. When his first child was born he wrote to his in-laws that “the harbor here is empty: – all the ships, brigs, schooners and smacks have scattered in all directions with the news for foreign parts”. Even his study in the remote New England farmhouse of Arrowhead gave him “a sort of sea-feeling... I look out of my window in the morning when I rise as I would out of a port-hole of a ship in the Atlantic. My room seems a ship’s cabin”.

Melville had found himself on the sea as a whaler in the Pacific, travelling from island to island for four years in the early 1840s. It was a time of liberation for a young man till then shackled to a family riddled with debt. Freed from the laws of the land, the high seas to Melville were a place of freedom and terror, where individuals could show their true colours, turning from civility to savagery, or vice versa.



by Alex Colville

Later in life he produced a series of quick sketches of the Galapagos Islands, briefly visited during his peregrinations. Melville was fascinated by the Spanish name for the archipelago, *Las Encantadas* – “The Enchanted Isles”.

Much of Melville’s writing is now forgotten, plodding and dry, the narrative clouded by incomprehensibility or frequent digressions. But on occasion his pen was dragged along by a mysterious Leviathan. In *The Encantadas*, the archipelago is portrayed as maleficent. In comparison to the natural paradise Charles Darwin described when visiting in 1835, they are said to be “evilly enchanted” by Melville. An apocalyptic land of ash and cinders, of “penal conflagration”.

As with EM Forster’s Malabar Caves in *Passage to India*, the Galapagos are presented as an ominous blank slate, challenging man’s beliefs with their lack of meaning. Man never evolved here, “Adam and his billions of posterity remain uncreated”, so its ways are strange and unknown. A rag-tag bunch of “renegades, and castaways, and cannibals”, lured by the island’s



Tom” became a sea-faring legend, a humungous beast still alive in 1881 whose shell had been carved with nautical names, messages and dates going back 110 years. Populations dwindled rapidly when it was discovered that they were easy to catch and tasted delicious, and they were

“Melville relates numerous stories he heard on his travels – of lone hermits enslaving sailors who wandered onto their land; of would-be Kings who descend into tyranny, surrounded by a retinue of vicious dogs; of lone rocks that from afar appear like sails, hopeful crews dashed against them. It’s almost as if the islands have a siren capacity, deliberately luring men in only to destroy them, bringing out humanity’s worst instincts – this selection of short stories was written over forty years before *Heart of Darkness*.

carried aboard and allowed to wander the decks, requiring little food and water on long whaling journeys. In Melville’s eyes this simple source of sustenance turns into a variety of symbols. They could be a vehicle to find God, a steed ridden like a Hindu deity in search of the mysteries of the

universe. Their stupidity aboard ship, refusing to divert their path by going around the mast, ramming and pushing against it for hours in the hope it would fall, was evidence “that these tortoises are the victims of a penal, or malignant, or perhaps downright diabolical, enchanter”.

LOST CLASSIC



Kuala Lumpur

IS AN UNEXPECTED TREAT

by Joseph Rachman



There is more to Malaysia’s capital than meets the eye – its extravagant cuisine and its wealth of culture make it worth a visit

Where should you go when travelling to Southeast Asia? Thailand and Vietnam are perennial favourites for backpackers and more well-heeled holiday-servants alike. Some fancying a city break might go to Singapore lured by the luxury hotels and food, maybe even the excellent museums. Malaysia still reels in a good number. Some visit the East Coast and the Bornean states appreciating their natural beauty and perhaps seeing orangutans. Others go to the jewel-like isle of Penang which offers not just natural beauty but also Georgetown with its World Heritage city centre and famously good food. Some might even trek up to the Cameron Highlands, an old hill station from the days of British rule, to witness a strange imperial fantasia where you can stroll among the tea plantations, play golf, and then settle down for tea and scones.

“Undeniably the greatest attraction of the city is the food. Malaysia is famous for its culinary offerings. Malay, Indian, and Chinese cuisine crowd alongside each other, and combine deliciously and KL is more than able to match the famed hawker stalls of Penang.

There are a number of options for those who fancy getting out of the crowded hubbub of the city. Many make the trip out to the Batu Caves, vast natural limestone caves now home to Indian temples. However, the site’s popularity means more crowds, and any visitor has to be prepared to brave an epically high staircase. Within the city itself Bukit Nanas offers an island of forest greenery which you can wander freely through before ascending up

visited in-between daily prayers. Just across the river are the old government buildings also built in the charming pseudo-Indian imperial style, and beyond them the Royal Selangor Turf Club. Those were the days civil servants had a clear sense of priorities. No longer the centre of government these buildings do house other things including The National Textile Museum. Entrance to the museum is free and after a brief tour of it beautiful examples of local batik cloth are on sale in the gift shop. If you turn north from Masjid Jamek you enter Kampung Baru, a still lively market area packed with stalls. To the south by the river there is also Pasar Seni,

high on treetop walkways. There skyscrapers peak through the trees inhabited by troupes of drowsing monkeys. KLCC Park also offers a surprising oasis of calm.

Conveniently the Masjid Negara and the Islamic Arts Museum are also located just by and in KLCC Park. The former, built with Central Asian oil money, is vast and done in a strangely asymmetric geometric style. While it certainly catches the eye, and the central prayer room does have a lavish beauty, you can’t help but think things perhaps went a little wrong when you move from it to the museum. In contrast the Islamic Arts building is cleanly elegant, and houses

Unsurprisingly the area around Petaling Street has some of the best Chinese food. Hokkien mee, a delicious fried noodle dish with many local variants, is a classic available everywhere. Excellent yong tau foo and curry mee, vegetables or tofu stuffed with meats and a spicy noodle dish, can be found on the nearby Madras Lane. Finally, Song Kee Beef Ball Noodles is justly famed for its eponymous food. For those fancying Indian food Sri Nirwana and Bala’s in Bangsar both offer fantastic South Indian food served banana leaf style, some rice and dahl on a banana leaf with extras ordered as you like. Bala’s also offers fantastic *thosai*, delicious rice crepe served with dahls and chutneys. Don’t be put off by queues – they move fast. Finally, the nightly Jalan Alor food market offers everything under the sun including favourites such as chili crab and stingray. You can also get what are popularly held to be the best chicken wings in the city and divine salted egg squid at Wong Ah, recognisable thanks to its Mickey Mouse-style logo.

After eating at Jalan Alor I used to enjoy slowly lounging through the warm tropical night to No Black Tie, KL’s best jazz bar. Some of the city’s best local jazz musicians frequently play there so best book ahead if you want to be sure of a place to watch the performance. If jazz isn’t your scene Kuala Lumpur has an excellent and varied night life. Cocktail bars are one of its many specialties with some of my personal favourites being JungleBird a snazzy tiki place, Pahit a well-stocked gin bar, and Coley with its signature Koktel’s twists on classic drinks using local ingredients. Bangsar the home of my favourite South Indian food is also known as a good place for bars, music, and generally living it up at the end of a long day. ■

WHERE TO EAT

ALAN ALOR
A vast open-air evening food market strung out along the road, good for classics like chili crab and stingray, as well as the city’s best chicken wings at Wong Ah.

PETALING STREET
Located near Chinatown the area is replete with foodstalls especially in the evening. Stock up on Malaysian Chinese classics or visit Song Kee for its beef ball noodles.

SRI NIRWANA
Serves some of the best South Indian banana leaf food in the city. Located in the shopping and nightlife district of Bangsar Nirwana.

WHERE TO DRINK

JUNGLEBIRD
Located in the snazzy Damansara area the bar still offers not too expensive and delicious Tiki drinks. Check out the nearby club/bar Skullduggery if you fancy a night out.

COLEY’S
Offers a relaxed unassuming atmosphere and mixes divine classic cocktails alongside delicious experimental versions with a regional twist.

PAHIT
Not too far from Jalan Alor, Pahit offers a lively gin bar that often packs out on busy nights.

WHERE TO STAY

MANDARIN ORIENTAL
One of the most luxurious hotels in a city replete with them, just across from the Petronas Towers, unsurprisingly expensive.

MAJESTIC HOTEL
Another luxury offering founded at the height of the British Empire it retains the attractive historic building and colonial vibe.

THE YARD BOUTIQUE HOTEL
Another beautiful colonial building but more intimate and cheaper than the Majestic, conveniently located in Bukit Bintang.

WHAT TO SEE

CHINATOWN
A lively market sells everything from food to fake designer goods right next to Chinese temples and the lovely Sri Maha Mariamman Temple.

ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM
Housed in a jewel-like building this museum offers a beautiful selection of treasures from across the whole Islamic world.

BATU CAVES
Vast limestone caves on the edge of the city popular with pilgrims and tourists alike. Observe the new temple construction going on and beware of the monkeys.



Down by the RIVERSIDE

Our food critic visits Sam’s Riverside in West London, a new restaurant set up as a rival to the River Café, the capital’s most successful culinary establishment



A little more than 30 years ago, a simple canteen opened in Hammersmith providing Italian-inspired lunches for an architectural practice in a converted warehouse by the Thames. Within a few years, the canteen expanded and is now arguably London’s most successful and durable restaurant – the River Café. It has stuck to its Mediterranean origins and still serves some of the finest Italian cuisine north of the Alps. Day in and day out, it serves upwards of 100 covers for lunch and dinner at prices which can comfortably nudge £200 for two. The clientele range from people who bugger around in the arts, rock stars, members of the Hollywood elite temporarily in Britain and even Oprah Winfrey, to even more colourful types. Co-founder Ruthie Rogers, a Woodstock generation veteran and loyalist, was rather shaken once when she discovered that a courtly old gentleman who shook her hand and praised her cuisine was actually General Pinochet. Like I said, it appeals to all types.

Given this formidable record and sprinkling of stardust, is there room for a rival establishment slightly upriver in the shadow of Hammersmith Bridge? Well, Sam Harrison, the brains behind Sam’s Riverside, which opened its stylish door earlier this month within the newly developed Riverside Studios thinks so.

There is no disputing Sam’s superior vista. The prices too, are roughly half of Ruthie’s, though the last thing that River Café devotees look at is the bill. But is it attempting to take on such an icon? Not really – it is aiming more at a casual West London audience and I suspect they will flock here. For a start, Sam Harrison really is a local, having run two successful places in Chiswick and Balham. It was crowd-funded directly from his previous client base, which is a useful

by Bruce Palling

way to get the punters in. The food is what could be termed Contemporary Anglo-Euro, which is no surprise given that Rowley Leigh, of Kensington Place and Le Café Anglais fame, is the culinary director. The head chef is Harvey Trollope, who has solid credentials from having recently worked at the London Ritz and before that at Wheeler’s.

The décor is reminiscent of a post-modern Ocean Liner with concrete columns and large flat circular lights, which could be mistaken for H.G. Wells era UFOs. Next to the superb vista of the Thames, there is a Crittall-style

“

There is space for around 100 covers including a large square shaped bar and in the more clement months, there is outdoor dining. Sam Harrison may be an Etonian but there are no superficial signs of it – he is a hard grafter with lots of front of house experience.

wall, dividing the private dining area from the main restaurant. There is space for around 100 covers including a large square bar and, in the more clement months, there is outdoor dining.

I have been a couple of times, including during the prelaunch and it has the feel of a place that will take off. There is a comforting array of oyster types as well as diver caught scallop ceviche, whelks, and langoustines at affordable prices. The main menu blends the conventional with the unusual – pork loin, pickled red onions, roast red leg partridge plus steak and kidney with dripping on toast or clams, braised trotter and

Sam’s Riverside - 1 Crisp Walk, London - samsriverside.co.uk
£100 for two. Set lunch – two courses £16.50; three £20.50

white beans. The game terrine starter was also reassuringly cohesive, with the surrounding strip of bacon holding the entire sphere together. It emanated comforting, intense and diverse flavours along with pickled girolles for contrast. The star of my first meal was a pair of peppered venison chops with onion squash and sprout tops. Harvey managed to produce perfectly pink venison which exuded satisfying flavour.

Robust flavours continued with a subsequent dish of sticky braised ox cheeks with a dollop of buttery mash potato and young carrots. This was another faultless execution of a classic British dish, which could easily have been served in a Michelin starred

restaurant. The puddings were simple and correct – chocolate mousse, lemon tart with figs and a trio of sorbets.

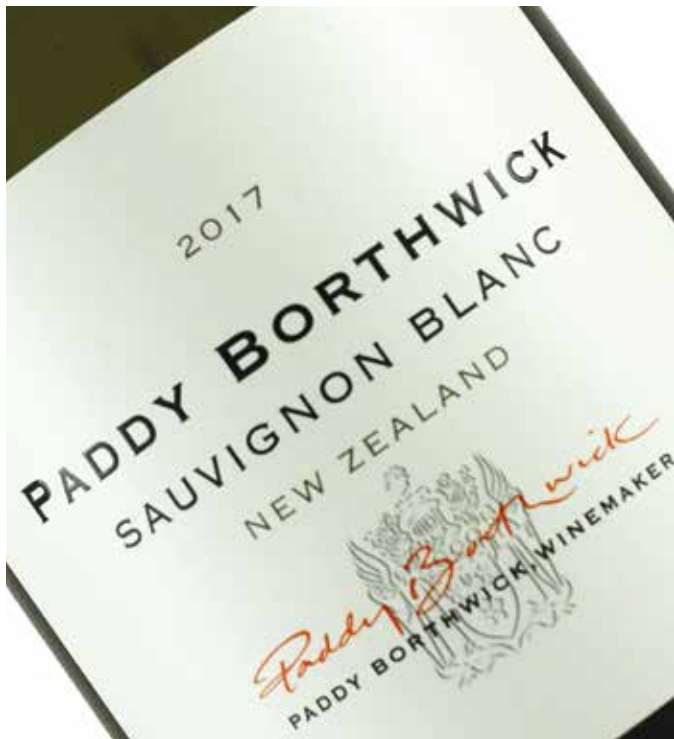
Another selling point is a set lunch menu of two courses for £16.50 and three for £20.50 with a wine list that had plenty of options around the £30 mark. These are early days but the plan is to have a proper breakfast offering for the commuters who use

the Thames footpath. There are pleasant enough pubs in the vicinity but no gastropubs. Harvey Trollope is a dedicated locavore and a tiger for seasonality, so it will definitely rack up points among the more concerned local citizenry. The only major fault is that at night, the Hammersmith Bridge is not lit up, but that is beyond their control.

It never takes long for a tricky customer to appear – there was a slight altercation at the entrance while I was having lunch – an aggrieved walk-in was told they were already fully booked the following night, though he seemed to think he had the last laugh on the receptionist. “You obviously don’t know who I am,” he said menacingly. “Sir, you are right – I am afraid I don’t.” ■

NEW ZEALAND, NEW WAY

by Guy Chatfield



In the wine trade press it was recently reported that a group of wine makers from the famed New Zealand wine area of Marlborough have created an “appellation” brand and trademarked it in their key international markets. The official explanation is that certain high quality producers wished to differentiate themselves from those who produce mass market wine, and therefore protect the value of their product. Of the one hundred and forty one wineries currently in one of the world’s most successful wine regions, there are forty nine members of this Appellation Marlborough Wine group.

When Frank Yukich, director of Montana Wines bought just over twelve hundred acres of Marlborough in 1973 and planted the first new Sauvignon Blanc vines of the modern era, he was certain it was going to be a success. In August of that year, at a ceremonial planting, he told the attending sceptical journalists that, “wines from here will become world famous.”

In the intervening forty six years, the Sauvignon Blanc from Aotearoa, “the land of the long white cloud”, has become a bar call in its own right. New Zealand Sauvignon is up there with Pinot Grigio. There are few other geographically located grape varieties that command the same recognition. There are the old world wines such as Chablis or Sancerre, which have been chosen for generations, but New Zealand Sauvignon and Marlborough hold a special reverence with drinkers in Britain, presenting a challenge to winemakers from the rest of Europe who grow Sauvignon.

What makes New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc so special? Is it because it is simply easy to say in a crowded bar or in a restaurant? In a world of often subtle pronunciation and sometimes difficult foreign language names, I think this has definitely played a part. Studying German was part of my degree at university and I often credit that as the main reason I feel confident among the Gewurztraminers and Muller Thurgaus.

It is also the taste – and the way that when the grape variety is grown in this northern part of the South Island, it displays tropical fruit flavours coupled with fresh citrus notes rather than the flinty, mineral nature that Sancerre, its French relative made with the same grape, displays. I’m definite on this one. New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc oozes “drinkability” - its high quality reputation hits that sweet-spot where it allows you to happily drink it on almost any occasion.

What I find intriguing is that due to the almost universal appeal and recognition among global consumers, these specific Marlborough growers with their creation of this new quality marque see the need to build a defence against the consumer becoming tired of their product. Like many of its predecessors, the popularity of Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough will wane over time to some extent, presenting rivals with an opportunity.

In response, the canny Kiwis of Marlborough are defending their territory. Frank Yukich was right. The wines have become world famous, and they are now mass market. But to maintain their reputation longer term they must emphasise quality. ■



CULTURE DIGEST

The best of Europe’s art and culture



Mozart and Strauss

Various dates throughout December, Haus am Beethovenplatz, Austria

The Vienna Royal Orchestra delights audiences with masterworks by two Austrian composers in the impressive neo-gothic Imperial Hall at the Beethoven Platz 1.



Messiah

13th-15th December, L'Auditori, Spain

Handel embraces older German passions and cantatas in Messiah. Often associated with Christmas, the oratorio actually covers the entire life of Christ and is the Baroque composer's masterwork. Conducted by Kazushi Ono and performed by the Barcelona Symphony and National Orchestra of Catalonia.



The Impressionists and Photography

Until 26th January 2020, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museo Nacional, Spain

The pioneering photography of Le Gray, Cuvelier, Nadar and Disderi had stimulating effects on young Impressionists, including Manet and Degas. This exhibition explores how these artists, and these mediums, influenced one another: for example, spontaneity and visual ambiguity in Impressionism; the materiality of the image, as well as pictorial effects in photography.



Fase

From 12th to 13th December, Espace 1789, France

Steve Reich’s minimalist Fase: Four Movements is staged with millimetre precision in Saint-Ouen for two nights.



Leonce & Lena

Various dates in December, National Theatre, Czech Republic

Based on Georg Büchner’s 1836 satire and choreographed by Christian Spuck this ballet tells the story of Leonce and Lena whose prearranged marriage leads them to flee separately to Italy only to meet under false identities and fall in love.

Sonatas by Beethoven

1st December, Salle Gaveau, France

French pianist Michel Dalberto is known for his acclaimed interpretations of German romantics, Chopin and Liszt. Here, the virtuoso turns his hand to Beethoven performing a range of pieces from Sonata No. 32 to the Appassionata.



Voices from the Colonies

Permanent exhibit, National Museum of Denmark, Denmark

A new permanent exhibition explores Denmark’s colonial history through the voices of those whose lives were shaped by it. Rather than commodities and trade, the exhibition will focus on people: the seven-year-old taken prisoner by Congo slave raiders; the enslaved woman who took her plantation owner to court; the Greenlandic seal hunter who sailed the kayak parade on Frederiksholm Canal and was honoured in the Prince’s Palace.



Portraits of the Portuguese Royal Family for the Chesma Palace

Until 15th December, State Hermitage Museum, Russia

In 1773, Russian ambassadors to European courts were instructed to commission paintings of the monarchs and members of their families for Catherine II in Saint Petersburg. To mark the 240 years of diplomatic relations between Russia and Portugal, this new exhibition explores portraits of the Portuguese royal family. In doing so, the exhibition tells the story of a monarchy, as well as royal portraiture. Part of the 8th Saint Petersburg International Forum.



Peggy Guggenheim: The Last Dogressa

Until 27th January 2020, Guggenheim-Venice, Italy

Highlighting the Venetian life of the famed collector, this exhibition consists of sixty works by famous and lesser-known artists. The exhibit offers a rare chance for masterpieces such as Magritte’s Empire of Light and Bacon’s Study for Chimpanzee to be re-contextualized with other international pieces, demonstrating Guggenheim’s interest in art beyond Europe and the United States.



Poland

Until 20th January 2020, Musée du Louvre-Lens, France

The Franco-Polish convention in 1919 led to a massive influx of Polish workers to France. To commemorate the centenary of this important document, a new exhibition at the Musée du Louvre-Lens holds a large retrospective. Consisting of 19th century artists, the exhibit traces the history of “Polishness” through art works that draw inspiration from the nation’s history, landscapes, and peasantry, creating images of Poland for Poles.

crossword & sudoku

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ACROSS

- _____homer
- _____pei (wrinkly Chinese dog)
- “Not to worry!”
- Royal name in Norway
- Somewhat, in music
- Still in bed
- Benjamin of Israel
- Hold _____ (talk at great length)
- TV host Van Susteren
- Italy’s largest port
- DOJ bureau
- “The _____ Code”
- They can sit
- Measure of current
- Lap around the sun
- Ford, to Chevrolet
- Piggy sites
- Barters
- Earth goddess
- Actor Fernando or Lorenzo
- Guy
- Digital anti-piracy measure (abbr.)
- 1990 John Goodman flick
- Water container
- Beauty
- Hyundai sedan
- “Island” on the Atlantic Coast
- Apple tool
- Drier’s need
- Desire intensely
- Make _____stop
- Docile
- Like the walls of Harvard Yard
- Nopes’ opposites
- Is human?
- _____Kong
- Robert who played A.J. Soprano
- London museum
- Graphic cyber-identity
- Mole
- Novelist Tami
- Yearn (for)
- Guard’s duties
- On the side (of)
- Additionally
- Violas’ sect.
- Away
- Autobahn abbr.
- Dressed snazzily
- Chairman in reverse?
- Expressions of disgust

- Hippie’s assent
- Area 51’s state
- “_____de lune” (Debussy)
- Muslim’s faith
- Sasquatch
- Lumberjack’s tool
- Walk heavily
- Insurance company with fowl ads?
- Stiller’s comedy companion
- Diplomat’s asset
- Oom-_____
- Trudge
- Clipped a sheep
- Film reviewer Roger
- French nose
- At some future time
- Arrival announcement
- Pickable
- Take _____(drink slowly)
- Beholden one
- Hunter’s target
- Lodge folks
- 201, once
- Land Rover, for one (abbr.)
- Historic Thor Heyerdahl craft
- First lady
- Alts.

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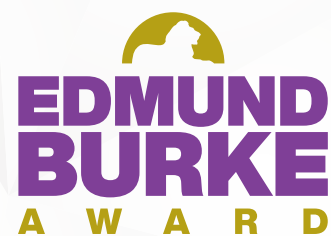
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