

NATO's 70th anniversary meeting showed that the organisation continues to play a vital role in the West's defence infrastructure

Robert Fox

Beijing becalmed Brutal treatment of Hong Kong protests shows

the Chinese Communist Party is gripped by fear of a Soviet-style loss of ideological control **b.2-3** Jack Dickens



p.9 Anne-Elisabeth Moutet

Saving capitalism US capitalism is out of control, the economist Thomas Philippon argues, it's time for a radical rethink

p.13 Declan Ganley

p.17

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How Britain's PM won his election and smashed the left p.4

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CONTENTS

Aung San Suu Kyi's refusal to

acknowledge genocide is a disgrace - Jack Dickens, p.13

Chateaubriand: the Romantic who

coined the name "Conservative" - Gerald Warner, p.14

Sir Michael Howard: the greatest

The Summer Isles: A Voyage of

Robert Fox, p.15

Alastair Benn, p.16 Bowie brought to book

Alexander Larman, p.16

Declan Ganley, p.17

style is turning heads

Gerald Malone, p.18

The end of The Affair John McKie, p.19

Knives Out: Big laughs and

fiendishly sophisticated re Alexander Larman, p.19

Maxim Emelvanychey's uniqu

the Imagination

titioner of military history

Apocalypse postponed - Robert Fox. p.2

The Conservative Party redraws the electoral - Gerald Warner, p.4

What next for Boris? - Maggie Pagano, p.5

Bulgaria charts a New Direction for the Western Balkans - p.6

ECR Party supports fair trial for former President of the Maldives

ECR Party makes significant contribution to the Internatio Democratic Union Forum - p.7

ECR Party Training Academy in

Angel Dzhambazki MFP Interview: EU Mobility Package threatens to choke the transport

industry - p.8 Beijing's ruling class is haunted by the fall of the Soviet Union

Jack Dickens, p.9 Leader column: Cut the ECB

down to size, p.10

The art of the Green Deal - Pieter Cleppe, p.10

The West will soon be as fatalistic and dysfunctional as Russia - Johan Hakelius, p.12

How Macron bungled his

pensions reform - Anne-Flisabeth Moutet, p.13

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APOCALYPSE POSTPONED

NATO's 70th anniversary meeting showed that the organisation is capable of reinventing itself and continues to play a vital role in the West's critical defence infrastructure

by **Robert Fox**

stands to fight another day, but there explained. are still disagreements about its purpose and direction.

terms of fighting together under the spending 2% of GDP on defence, as Turkey especially. key Article 5 of the founding treaty they pledged in 2014 at Cardiff. Trump which supports the need for allies to praised them for this, and credited gic aims and attitudes of both China respond when one is attacked. This himself with winning them round. and Russia in terms that were at once now embraces cyber attacks as well This has brought defence expenditure plain and subtle. Russia's destabili as by force of arms.

The alliance is now grappling with space defence and security, and not before time.

Much of the media. especially among the British hosts, focused on the reality television show aspect of the gathering at a rather unspectacular hotel to the north of London. Premiers Trudeau. Johnson, President Macron and Britain's Princess Anne were caught on camera sniggering about President Trump's indulgence in impromptu media conferences - even in the hallowed halls of Buckingham Palace.

Later Trump cut short the visit entirely, not before calling Macron "two-faced". his remarks on NATO "nasty" and then calling him his friend. For the reporters this was meat and drink, or, rather. delicious froth - a wonderful holiday from serious thought and forensic analysis.

The bad boys didn't turn out to be so bad after all. Trump praised NATO, so did Macron, and even Erdogan's warnings

together. This seemed to major unanswered questions will lion annually. be the general verdict on now be pondered by a panel of "wise

Progress was made, though on the member nations are moving towards guises in the views of different allies,

66

The London meeting showed that NATO can reinvent itself, and is doing so. The

basis is partnership, with awkward members inside and awkward neighbours outside, alike. The rapid change of the strategic context is the big challenge - illustrated by a new and ominous geopolitical vocabulary: cyber, space,

climate, new militias, non-state actors, migration, militant religious fanatics, genetic warfare, nano, and quantum.



t least the family stuck and caveats became muted. The from non-US allies to USD \$130 bil-

The alliance now acknowledges the , the NATO 70th anniver- counsellors", though the terms under 360 degree threat. It also includes sary meeting in London. The alliance which they will operate weren't space as an "operational domain." It continues to warn about the continu-The brief concluding statement ing and changing threats of terrorpointed to real achievements. More ism - though this takes very different

> This time it addressed the stratezation in Ukraine and

the Baltic region are acknowledged, as was the cancellation of vital treaties.

The scrapping of the INF 1987 - interme diate nuclear forces treaty is particularly bothersome. This seems to be triggering a new arms race with Russia, and maybe America, about to deploy new generation intermediate missiles across the marchlands of continental Europe. This concern has to be taken further, not least because there have been few positive signs

that the START 2 strategic weapons treaty will be renewed after it expires in two years time.

For the first time China and Chinese influence were albeit mentioned. extremely cautiously, n that they repre sented "challenges" and "opportunities." The role of Huawei in running Europe's 5G communications network is now doubtful, with many of the allies now following Trump's line. Less clearly stated was the

Trieste.

Giuseppe Conte of Italy.

suggested.

speak to each other.

How to save capitalism from itself The Last Waltz - Mattie Brignal, p.20

s the perfect escape Jack Dickens, p.21 The world is Daniel Calvert's oyster - Bruce Palling, p.22

A winter weekend in Dubrovnik

Has Prosecco gone flat? Guy Chatfield, p.22 Culture Digest - p.23



implications of China's neo-mercantilist bid to dominate the globalized economy, especially through the "belt and road" project. Officially, NATO, as much as the EU seems reluctant to acknowledge China as a major European player, in cyber, communi cations, and diverse projects like the acquisition of strategic ports such as

The most interesting questions for the future of the alliance have been raised by Presidents Macron and Erdogan, and from offstage by prime ministers Erna Solberg of Norway and

Macron was recovering from a badly translated interview he gave to his remarks were covered by the use of the conditional and the subjunctive. If leaders behaved as Trump and Erdogan did over operations in northern Syria lately, NATO "may/ or could" become brain dead, he had

On all counts Macron had a point. Leaders couldn't just decide unilaterally when the NATO rules applied. The European Defence Identity is important, though as Merkel and Kaczynski insist, it has to complement NATO. It cannot stand alone, as Macron hinted to the Economist, only to resile at the London meeting. The relationship between EU European Defence and SHAPE at NATO is dysfunctional: the two operational headquarters barely

The Erdogan dilemma is of a different order. He wants NATO to declare LONDRES the YPG Kurdish popular militias a terrorist threat to the alliance as a

66

For the first time China and Chinese influence were mentioned, albeit extremely cautiously, in that they represented "challenges" and "opportunities." The role of Huawei in running Europe's 5G communications network is now doubtful, with many of the allies now following Trump's line. Less clearly stated was the implications of China's neo-mercantilist bid to dominate the globalized economy, especially through the "belt and road" project. Officially, NATO, as much as the EU seems reluctant to acknowledge China as a major European player, in cyber, communications, and diverse projects like the acquisition of strategic ports such as Trieste.

NATO was becoming brain dead, and enhancement of Baltic security. The tem, are not. The purchase of the mis- the southern area of NATO, the should be replaced in Europe by the YPG is an alliance matter, but appar- siles is a matter of discreet Turkish Mediterranean in total, was ignored. European Defence Union and a new ently Ankara's relations with Russia, territorial defence. It seems to matter On 5th December the Italians hosted rapprochement with Russia. In fact, particularly in the acquisition of the not that the system is configured to a meeting of the Mediterranean and contributed. He wasn't in London

LONDON

down almost every attack aircraft in

NATO's current order of battle. Erna Solberg's sharp intervention

captured the moment at the warm-up seminar "NATO Engagement" in London the day before the summit meeting in Watford. Asked by a rather insouciant interviewer what she saw as the biggest strategic threat to NATO. "Russia's disruption. or terrorism?" she snapped. "From a Norwegian perspective, the biggest strategic threat to NATO is the melting of the northern icecap, and all it implies." It was a wakeup call. NATO has started issuing pious official words about climate and environmental change, but done little to elaborate ideas, strategy and policy to confront it – even as we are all begin ning to feel its effect.

Another important intervention offstage was from the government of Giuseppe Conte. Italy's surprisingly



Dialogue, a formation of NATO and seven Mediterranean countries.

The Rome gathering addressed some actual security worries that London airbrushed out, including Libya and the ramifications of the violent demonstrations from Lebanon to Iraq and Iran. It gave severe warning about the international sponsorship of the warlord of Benghazi, General Haftar Khalifa, "Khalifa was identified as a major problem, not the solution for Libya," an Italian source reported.

Italy then led the condemnation of foreign interference in Libva from Russia, Egypt, UAE, Oatar and even France. There was a warning, too. against extending such foreign adventhe Economist, in which he claimed whole - or else he will veto NATO Russian S400 air defence missile sys- durable prime minister. At London, turism to Algeria in its increasingly fragile state.

Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, was present at the meeting, at all - perhaps a mistake

NATO's first secretary general Britain's Lord Ismay explained its purpose as "keeping the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down." All this seemed at risk of being turned upside down on the eve of the London meeting - the Russians present. Germany dominant in any EU Defence arrangement, and Trump's isolationist America wanting out.

None of this is happening – so far. The London meeting showed that NATO can reinvent itself, and is doing so. The basis is partnership, with awkward members inside and awkward neighbours outside, alike. The rapid change of the strategic context is the big challenge - illustrated by a new and ominous geopolitical vocabulary: cyber, space, climate, new militias, non-state actors, migration, militant religious fanatics, genetic warfare, nano, and quantum.

The Conservative Party REDRAWS THE ELECTORAL MAP

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, fought the election on one succinct slogan: "Get Brexit done!" His gamble on attracting working class voters has paid off to stunning effect

he UK general election was an extraordinary event. It was, for the first and almost certainly the last time at a British election, chiefly about Europe. This was the Brexit election: it reiterated, for the benefit of tin-eared politicians, the result of the 2016 referendum on leaving the EU. In tandem with this theme, a Labour Party that had been taken over by an aggressively Marxist faction, tried to gain power by fudging the issue of Brexit and attempting to bribe the electorate with promises of public spending on a totally impracticable scale

The distinctive feature of any general election in Britain is the firstpast-the-post electoral system. In each constituency the voter simply puts a cross opposite the name of the preferred candidate and whoever receives the largest number of votes of public spending. It pledged to creis elected as Member of Parliament. ate a £150bn "social transformation It is the simplest voting method ever fund" to support the biggest prodevised and strikingly different from gramme of state-owned house-buildthe various systems of proportional ing since the Second World War and sides and deprived Labour of suprepresentation. It favours the two the upgrading of schools and hospi- port all across the country. The elecbecome serious contenders.

of voters who had watched, appalled, the British electorate. for three and a half years while a par- Its very extravagance liament dominated by pro-Remain was its undoing: vot-MPs stubbornly blocked every effort ers refused to believe to implement the decision of the 2016 it was a credible referendum and take Britain out of the proposition. EU. Even many people who had voted Remain were repelled by the spectacle pledged to abandon of a democratic vote being nullified.

This alienation was aggravated more on public serwhen the newly elected leader of the vices such as recruit-Europhile Liberal Democrat Party, ing more police and Jo Swinson, decided to fight the elec- nurses. But the cost tion on a platform of "Stop Brexit!" was only a small She proposed to do so not by holding fraction of the gara second referendum - which would gantuan Labour prohave been controversial enough - but gramme. The two main parties also and factories. With this strategy the many abandoned Labour at the elec- Domestically, Boris Johnson is Labour Party

the party to an unbelievable deluge Brexit Labour vote in the north.



The Conservatives austerity and spend

by Gerald Warner

The resulting fudge alienated both largest and long-established par- tals. Another "green transformation tion was rancorous and yet, in a way, majority for the Conservatives. In the to craft a softer Brexit. ties - Labour and Conservative - and fund" was to create a green econ-strangely subdued. Boris Johnson has event, their forecasts were fairly accu-

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Boris Johnson made a straightforward appeal to voters: give me a working majority and I will deliver Brexit with no more delays and extensions. Labour, in contrast, was divided on the issue. Jeremy Corbyn was a lifelong Eurosceptic, but his party hated Brexit, so he had to trim his sails.

by simply revoking Article 50, with- pursued contrasting Brexit policies. Conservatives were arguably depriv- tion, regarding it as now a Remain employing the phrase "One Nation drawing Britain's application to leave Boris Johnson made a straightfor- ing themselves of the talents of a party that had disregarded the wishes Conservative Party" as if it were one the EU. That would have meant arbi- ward appeal to voters: give me a work- colourful public performer; but they of its working-class voters. The result word. Austerity is history. While trarily annulling the decision of 17.4 ing majority and I will deliver Brexit calculated that was preferable to the was a catastrophe for Labour. There tough on crime and immigration (not million voters, a clear repudiation of with no more delays and extensions. risk of the Prime Minister committing was a similar disaster, on a smaller his previous posture), he is willing democracy. That feeling of democracy Labour, in contrast, was divided on some gaffe that would give the media scale, in Wales, also a Labour strong- to loosen the purse strings of public

behaviour of the leader of the oppo- long Eurosceptic, but his party hated By the time of the election the that supplied the majorities for three izens of a similar political phenomsition, Jeremy Corbyn, his shadow Brexit, so he had to trim his sails. Remain wing of the Conservative Labour governments in the 20th cen- enon: the combination of generous chancellor John McDonnell and the Aware that Labour constituencies in Party had imploded: some MPs had tury - the Scottish nationalists made public expenditure and social conserthat exercised an iron control over the ily to Leave, he tried to tread a path defected to other political parties, seat in Scotland. mid-way between the Remainer left others stood as independents, many The Labour manifesto committed in London and the blue-collar pro- retired from politics. They had col- Conservatives, 203 for Labour and Conservatism essays something similaborated with the opposition parties just 11 for the Liberal Democrats, lar under Prime Minister Johnson.

subvert Brexit and at the general elec- inevitability of Brexit, some EU leadtion they fared badly at the hands of a ers are rejoicing in the UK premier's vengeful electorate.

ious opinion polls predicted a safe line Tory Brexiteers, encouraging him

decades

The Liberal Democrat leader Jo Swinson, who had aspired to "cancel Brexit", lost her seat. While many lavers of interpretation can be put on those results, one thing is certain: Britain wants to leave the EU - the myth of "Leaver remorse" put about by Remainers after the referendum is totally discredited. The strengthening of the nationalists in Scotland, who demand a second referendum on Scottish independence, guarantees friction between Westminster and Scotland over the next few years.

How will Boris Johnson, now armed with a large overall majority in a Remainer-free party, use his victory? Firstly, he will rush through Parliament all necessary legislation for Britain's departure from the European Union on 31 January: this is one Brexit deadline that will not be in the various parliamentary ploys to extended. Faced with what is now the large majority, in the belief that it Throughout the campaign the var- frees him from the pressure of hard-

Since nobody knows Johnson's it is very difficult for smaller polition omy at a cost of £250bn. Proposed always been known as a showman, rate, though slightly underestimating inner political thoughts, that might cal groupings to break through and renationalisation of all the main unpredictable, but very characterful. the strength of the Conservative suppublic utilities was costed by the With the media keeping all the party port. The problem was that those why would he want a softer Brexit? The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, Confederation of British Industry leaders under a microscope, however, polls recorded projected vote share, It would compromise the trade deals fought the election on one succinct at a preliminary output of £196bn. Johnson confined himself to inter- but each constituency had its own dis- he wishes to negotiate outside the slogan: "Get Brexit done!" It tapped And so on ... This was by far the most views with unchallenging interloc- tinctive profile and some of them were EU. It would hobble Britain with teninto the deep resentment of millions profligate programme ever put to utors and doing tours of businesses tight marginals, so that a few votes drils of EU regulations and laws, not redirected one way or to mention financial contributions. the other could have a that would quickly become a focus of disproportionate effect domestic resentment. Johnson has on the national picture. seen the fate of UK politicians who Pro-Remain London betray the promise of Brexit: why was seen as Labour's would he needlessly incur controversy greatest strength, pro- and odium? It is equally likely that he vided it could hold onto would drive a harder bargain, as the its seats in the north - first British prime minister Brussels the so-called "Red Wall" has dealt with who had no parliamenof safe constituencies - tary drag-chains restraining him. He that had been held for could threaten an exit on WTO terms in December 2020 if he does not get But those seats had a reasonable agreement. The EU may largely voted Leave at have painted itself into a very uncom the referendum and fortable corner.

being at risk was reinforced by the the issue. Jeremy Corbyn was a life- a field day and derail their campaign. hold. In Scotland - the part of the UK spending. That might remind EU cithard-left faction named Momentum the north of England had voted heav- been expelled from the party; some large gains, reducing Labour to just one vatism that has given Poland's Law and Justice Party a long lease on power. It The outcome was 365 seats for the will be interesting to see if post-Brexit



cooked.

cooked, or even flavoured.

clinging to a hard exit.

What next for

Johnson has wrongfooted his political enemies at home but the next stage of the Brexit negotiations could be tricky to pull off in his favour

ne of Boris Johnson's best positive partnership with the EU, one

Will it be a perfectly roasted golden Other than the repetitive - but obligations in return. clearly effective - slogan of "Get Brexit

the authority to be head chef in the vices regulation and tax kitchen, free to take the UK out of the tionship with the EU by end of 2020. in next year's negoti of the Exchequer and Home Office and regulations. Secretary, the character of whom he

his No 10 victory speech, he wants a bers as possible

lines of the election was that works closely with our continenhis description of Brexit tal neighbours on the big issues of the as "oven-ready." The ques- day but one that heals the country too.

the UK as closely aligned as possible? that he will be asked to accept certain once unleashed, the country's animal more pertinently, into the North and

The EU will be bar-Done", Johnson has not given any gaining hard to keep hints as to how he wants his Brexit the UK aligned on key issues such as work Theoretically, the size of Johnson's ers and environmental parliamentary majority gives him standards, financial ser-

That's the contradic EU after four years of tortuous grid- tion that Johnson will lock and to define a new trade rela- have to work through We will only know what recipe ations. How to square Johnson wants to follow when we leaving the EU but know the make-up of his cabinet, and keeping as much access who he anoints as Brexit Secretary. As to the single market as with the three great offices of state, possible without tying

appoints will give a clearer idea of how Britain can adopt a zero-tariff, zero- going into the economy. he wants to cook his bird. What his quota deal - so long as the UK doesn't

by **Maggie Pagano**

tion Britain's new Prime Minister has They were good, powerful warm words Merkel and her German lobby of SME sector to grow. to decide now is how Brexit will be but they don't give any clues as to what industrialists who will be pushing to happens next with getting Brexit done. keep the UK supine, tied down to as suading the PM to take this route as he months. The only certainty is a future free many EU regulations as possible to has been in advising him on the elecbrown bird, tender on the inside trade deal with the EU will be pre- stop the UK becoming more compet- tion, then the country might be onto a risks. The danger with a managed deal and crispy on the outside? Or barbe- cisely that, a trade. If Johnson wants itive and productive. Quite rightly, winner. But there is much hard work is that going for WTO tariffs might cued out of existence by a vengeful the UK to have good access to the EU's the Germans on industry - and the to be done, particularly on redirecting tip the already fragile economy into European Union intent on keeping single market, there is no question French on finance - are terrified that, investment into the real economy and,

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As Johnson said again today in his No 10 victory speech, he wants a positive partnership with the EU, one that works closely with our continental neighbours on the big issues of the day but one that heals the country too. They were good, powerful warm words but they don't give any clues as to what happens next with getting Brexit done.

those of Foreign Secretary, Chancellor the country up in unnecessary rules spirits will roar again, particularly with the promise of new investment the EFTA4UK lobbying group call until July 2020 to agree on whether To date, Brussels has indicated that and more spending on infrastructure the "Tesco" style no-frills deal. This is they will extend the transitional

huge majority of new Conservative go down the light-touch Singapore Singapore is not the route favoured up. This allowed EFTA countries to sion but now that he has such a major-MPs does mean, however, is that he is route. And that's the rub. With such a by those around Johnson, his chief sign individual FTAs with the then ity, he has the freedom to change the not so beholden to the hardliners in huge trade surplus in goods with the advisers such as Dominic Cummings European Economic Community. goal posts. the ERG group, some of whom are still UK, the EU negotiators will do their and industrialists like Sir Anthony These took on average nine months to utmost to ensure we have as few com- Bamford of JCB. Their strategy for negotiate but were basic. As Johnson said again today in petitive advantages over their mem- growth is far more ambitious than Third, the UK could stay in the EEA we haven't heard about? Who knows, that. They want to build up the and join EFTA, the European Free the PM may surprise us once again.

country's industrial base, reversing the trade deficit in goods, investing heavily in innovation and new tech- Iceland are members. This is particularly true of Angela nologies and giving space for the UK's

If Cummings is as successful at per-

South West, to rebalance the regions.

What, then, are the Brexit Secretary to pursue?

WTO rules and mutu- So unlikely. ally agreed mini-deals. within the deadline.

Trade Association, of which Norway, Switzerland. Liechtenstein

Fourth, he could go for a super EU-Canada type deal, CETA, which is likely to take longer than 11

Each option has its benefits and recession, and annoy the business world which craves certainty.

The second option could be a good starting point but would not take into account the UK's huge financial sermost realistic options vices industry unless negotiators can for PM and the new get a side agreement on mutual recognition or equivalence.

The third EFTA option makes a lot At present, there are of commercial sense because it gives still only four serious the UK the most access to the single options for him to take, market and keeps the UK out of EU First, Johnson could legislation on fisheries and the ECJ. go for a "managed no But it also means the UK would have deal", falling back on to accept free movement of workers.

The problem with a Canada style This could be done deal is the amount of time required to do such a deal. And time is of the Second, the PM could go for what essence. The UK and the EU have only what countries did in the 1970s before period by up to another two years. So Yet as far as one can tell, doing a the European Economic Area was set far Johnson has ruled out an exten-

> Maybe there is a fifth recipe that Johnson has ready for the oven that

New Direction's Western Balkans summit. 7th December. Sofia

Bulgaria charts a New Direction for the Western Balkans



he New Direction Western Ekaterina Zaharieva – as well as the vative GERB party and head of the ing these complex issues. European Commissioner for Digital Bulgarian delegation of the EPP The panels moved beyond the diag- addressing issues of influence by based government, freedom, and

to aid the development of strong dem- region. ocratic institutions and vigorous civil Direction vision.

mit he announced its aim would be it would be necessary to refrain from of the path ahead. "to formulate the priorities for the imposing hardline legal norms for be brought into "pan-European dia- with the European project. logue" driven by "successful reforms" Balkans from the European project.



After these opening remarks, the the "Western Balkan countries also future he pointed out the success of integration of the Western Balkans is

of December. Bringing ical leaders from across the Balkans, issues in the region which needed to membership. together politicians from a range of Europe, and the political spectrum be resolved before integration could

Economy and Society Mariya Gabriel. group. She made a passionate case noses provided by the keynote speak- non-EU countries, economic devel- security for the region. The prominent International for wielding the latest IT technol- ers and sought to dig into the detail opment, religious extremism, gover- Looking to the future the day's Republican Institute which seeks to ogy to connect the Western Balkans of how concrete policies might estab- nance, rule of law, and migration will final panel "Future of the Western promote democracy and freedom with the rest of Europe and ensure lish greater integration between be vital to allow the Western Balkan. Balkans: A Young Political Leader's globally and has worked in the Balkans the future economic success of the the EU and the region. One partic- nations to be effective partners and Roundtable" brought together bright ularly hot topic revolved around guarantors of European security as a young voices in politics from across Extending from digital solutions the future of NATO and the secu- part of the NATO alliance. society also participated in the sum- into the political arena, Minister rity of the Western Balkans. After mit, showing its support for the New Prodanov urged that cooperation is French President Emmanuel Macron ment with the Transatlantic Alliance Merheim-Eyre, showed that enthusithe key to successful EU integration. recently declared the Transatlantic could be strengthened panellists asm existed across Europe for further The summit was opened by Angel He said that, in the pursuit of joining alliance to be "brain dead", the pan- pointed out that issues such as the strengthening EU and Transatlantic Dzhambazki, Vice President of New the EU, "a genuine attempt has to be ellists and participants were all eager migration crisis and a need to further ties with the Western Balkans - and Direction and MEP representing the made to take into account the inter- to weigh in upon this momentous strengthen the independent press to optimism about the bright future this Bulgarian National Movement Party. ests of the citizens of the countries" debate about Europe's defence needs help Western Balkan states make their might bring. Setting a positive tone for the sum- involved. He thoughtfully argued that - and present a more positive vision cases to the EU and NATO. Panellists The New Direction event was

future of the region". He expressed political success, and that the Western Officer for Russia and the Western investment in the region. This would within a wider European project. his hope that North Macedonia, Balkans will need to be able to engage Balkans in the Public Diplomacy strengthen Western Balkans security. Dzhambazki said that "Sofia is the Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia could all in dialogue in order to build bridges Division at NATO, was adamant that and build confidence in the benefits of gateway to the EU" for all the counthere is no alternative to NATO. The the geopolitical framework of the EU tries of the region, and expressed his This provided a perfect point of organisation is, he argued, "the main and NATO. aimed at a longer-term "integration departure for the speech delivered forum that gives the opportunity for Krasimir Bogdanov summarised neighbours" with all their endeavwithin the EU". He expressed regret at by Prodanov's colleague, Minister Europeans and North Americans to the attitude in Bulgaria well, when ours to reform their countries. New President Emmanuel Macron's recent Zaharieva. She stated unequivo- gather and discuss the most import- he said that ensuring that such goals Direction has empowered Bulgarian veto of EU expansion, and urged that cally that "the current impasse" in ant issue of security and defence." are met is a priority of the Bulgarian conservatives to continue acting as



As such insurmountable. Still as she argued ing a pathway for the spread of rules-

Balkans Summit took summit kicked off a series of key- have a great deal of responsibility," Macedonia, which has already ful- in the economic and political interplace in Sofia on the 7th note speeches and panels, with polit- and said that there were outstanding filled many requirements for NATO est of Europe and should remain one of the Union's main priorities." The while Nataliya Bulgarian government, and those parties the conference was supported coming together to present their continue. However, she also struck Apostolova, the Ambassador for the present at the conference, are pasby prominent figures including lead- remarks. The first speech was deliv- a positive note welcoming that "the EU in Kosovo, sounded a more cau- sionate about the role that Sofia can ing members of the Bulgarian govern- ered by European Commissioner topic of the Western Balkans" has tious note stating that the Western play as a window to the West. Sofia ment - Minister of Justice Nikolay Mariya Gabriel, who has previously been brought "back to the agenda" in Balkans "have specific challenges" may well prove key in overcoming the Prodanov and Foreign Minister served as an MEP for the conser- Bulgaria. A vital first step for address- it is clear these are by no means opposition to integration and provid-

> the region. The panel moderated by Indeed, discussing how engage- the IRI's programme director, Dr Igor

also argued that there also needs to closed with some poignant reflections Robert Pszczel, the serving Senior be more infrastructure and defence on the future of the Western Balkans desire to "help our brothers and our









to trial and convicted.





Premier Doug Ford.



ECR Party supports fair trial for former President of the Maldives

of November, after he was convicted of dence in the ruling. that Yameen had embezzled the funds. response.

courts, Yameen has now been brought four justices of the Supreme Court. opponents. The trial itself was considered heavily

lished beyond any reasonable doubt sanctions upon his government in pendence of the criminal justice sys-

he European Conservatives However, President Yameen's trial The Maldives are also one theatre in and Reformists Party strongly was held with a lack of transpar- which a geopolitical contest between condemns the continued ency and in irregular circumstances China and India is played out. Yameen's imprisonment of former President of - including the case taking place in attempts to bring the archipelago closer the Maldives Abdulla Yameen. He has front of only one judge as opposed to to the political orbit of the government been under scrutiny since he lost his three as in most high profile cases. in Beijing has also caused controversy bid for re-election in September 2018, Currently, there is no Chief Justice or within the country. The Indian governafter which he peacefully handed over a Prosecutor General holding office ment believes that the Maldives should power. After being arrested in in the Maldives and ahead of the trial, instead be seeking closer ties with Delhi, February 2019 by an order of the the government removed from office and has expressed support for Yameen's

The situation on the ground is com-The former President was sen- politicised by the government in a way plex, but former President Yameen has tenced to five years in prison at the end that demonstrates a lack of indepen- since allowed for the peaceful transfer of power. Accordingly, the European money laundering. The government The political controversies sur- Conservatives and Reformists Party prosecution charged that he had trans- rounding Yameen include allega- expresses strong concerns about the ferred a payment worth \$1 million tions that his government has used process that led to the imprisonment worth of state funds to a private com- excessive force to crush dissent in of former President Yemeen and calls pany before passing them into his own the Maldives. Several opposition pol- on the European Union to investigate bank account. Judge Ali Rasheed, the iticians were jailed under Yameen, this erosion of the rule of law and the head of a panel of five judges who con- and the US and the European Union universal human rights within the victed Yameen, said that they had estab- have previously threatened to impose country - as well as the wider indetem in the Maldives.



ECR Party makes significantECR Partycontribution to the InternationalTraining Academy **Democratic Union Forum**



ment echoed in the opening speech ECR Party delegation.

Canada including Governor Haley insight into these difficult issues.

Barbour, Senator Patrick Toomey, Many of the ECR's member parcomed all attendees with a senti- Republicans and others, as part of the



Minister Stephen Harper made the of the day were discussed. Speeches by play in solving important contem- in order to discuss the organization's America, to Europe. opening remarks followed by other Senator Mitt Romney and Secretary porary issues. It was attended by the close engagement in Eastern Europe. luminaries of the right in the USA and of Transportation provided further President of the ECR Jan Zahradil, ECR MEP and Chair of the European by Lord Ashcroft, and the Chair of accepted it will make it the second Parliament Security and Defence the House Republican Conference, Albanian member party alongside Senator Todd Young and Ontario ties have attended the forum, includ- Subcommittee Anna Fotyga MEP, and Congresswoman Liz Cheney. A very the Democratic Party of Albania. The ing the Conservative Party in the ECR MEP Daniel Hannan, who also enjoyable evening was had by all. Moving on to business Harper wel- UK, Israel's Likud, the Albanian represented the Conservative Party.

meeting with the former Canadian "Advancing Female Leadership is the IDU offers - and to work with by Senator John Barrasso. The pan- The European Conservatives and premier Stephen Harper to dis- and Equity: Perspectives from other members to promote its agenda els were extensive ranging across free Reformist-presented lunch on the cuss about the future expansion of Conservative Women Across the globally.

in Granada

of the year in Southern Spain from support the candidate. Many of the the 13th to the 14th of December. delegates came from the Spanish Vox of the previous Training Academy to double their number of sitting that was held in Madeira earlier MPs in Parliament, as well as electin the year, in which nearly 200 ing their first three Members of the activists from 31 countries gath- European Parliament. ered to discuss the latest campaign All of this took place in the beautechniques.

paigning - with sessions led by vet- formal dinner. eran Conservative Party activist The ECR Party is committed to the attending delegates detailed engaged in European politics.

he European Conservatives guidelines on how to identify poten and Reformists held their tial voters, how to win them over and second Training Academy then finally how to get them out to This followed on from the success party, who earlier this year managed

tiful setting of Granada in Southern The focus on the Granada event Spain. Delegates also had the chance was on more conventional cam- to explore the ancient city ahead of a

Richard Murphy. Mr Murphy, who training the next generation of polithas long run election campaigns ical activists – it is important to get in the UK and further afield, gave more ordinary people involved and



t the forum's inaugural trade and protectionism, migration, topic "The power of private capi- the IDU and the membership of Law Globe" served as a stimulating final inner on the 4th of December digital government, new electoral tac- tal tackling public policy challenges" and Justice Party from Poland, and event. Interesting perspectives were In Washington D.C. IDU tics, and the future of conservatism provided other interesting insights with Dan Twining, President of the offered from across the globe with Chairman former Canadian Prime and some of the most pressing issues into the role the private sector can International Republican Institute participants from Africa, to South

The Republican Party of Albania The final dinner was addressed has applied to join the IDU, if Republican Party of Albania looks for-On the 6th December, the final day ward to the benefits that the presti-Anna Fotyga MEP had a private of the conference, the final panel gious international organisation that

Angel Dzhambazki MEP FUMORITI PACKAGE threatens to choke the transport industry

The Conservative sat down with Angel Dzhambazki MEP to talk over the issues raised by the EU's transport reforms

THE CONSERVATIV

EU project aimed at the transpor- administrative burden. Of course, carbon emissions tation industry], it seems that the enhancing this very burden is not issue has been left in the background new to the EC. Its administration and almost nothing has come out on has become an army, which not only Will these additional costs make its progress lately. Can you tell us a defends itself well, but also tries to shipping and forwarding more little more about the status of the create new soldiers through pointless expensive and won't they be passed dossiers?

ANGEL DZHAMBAZKI MEP

Perhaps the reason for the slow around 119 million euro, which unfor- Of course, this is also what those who negotiations is that the Mobility tunately will not make the working are trying to push this package are try-Package is currently being discussed conditions for the drivers of heavy ing to hide from the people. The genat trialogue meetings between the goods vehicles better. European Commission the European Why? Because even now, drivers the impact of the Mobility Package Parliament and the Council of the are forced to pay for hotels in order This is done on purpose. Not only EU. On the other hand, until the 2nd to have an invoice (required by some are our businesses in danger, but of December we had no appointed authorities) while at the same time also businesses across Europe. I can European Commission. At the last tri- they sleep in their cabin to keep their assure you that preliminary analyses alogue held on the 25th of November, cargo from raids by illegal migrants indicate that the regulation is going to

nothing was agreed. It became evident that neither the former commissioner for transport Violeta Bulc, nor the European Road Alliance had any intention to soften their position. This may be good for

our transport industry and us because the new transport commissioner, Adina Valyan, is from Romania. He is one of our allies in the Council. The other positive factor is that from January 1st 2020 Croatia assumes the

it will be very complicated.

THE CONSERVA

figures. Can you elaborate?

ANGEL DZHAMBAZKI ME

In October, a KPMG survey was commissioned by the Bulgarian transport Package as it is proposed.

new regulations.

Let me give you an example. The additional cost for hotels will be ANGEL DZHAMBAZKI MEP

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No one knows the exact figure of the hike of the prices! I will give you a simple example. A car, regardless of the manufacturer, is often produced in five different factories in different parts of Europe. If all five deliveries increase their price by 2-3%, this means that the price of this car will increase by at least 8-9% if of course it does not increase by more because of different speculators in the production and supply chain.

presidency of the Council. In my and organized criminals. I will now prices will go up because of that. The opinion, now is the right time to reach add that the requirement of such doc- transport industry is one of the most ple do not think about is the fact that ers. Eventually the adoption of this our goals of protecting our home uments is not within the competence important of our industries. Surely, it should the measure for returning of package will make the workers poorer. transport industry, because after that of local judicial authorities, accord- will produce a domino effect which the trucks become operational, maning to a letter from the Commission will hit all other industries, thereby ufacturers will be forced to build to the International Transport reducing purchasing power, and at new warehouses. For a while now. How do you see the outcome of this Union. For that reason, as a proof is the same time reducing the growth the method of "just in time deliv- situation and will Bulgaria and its In the public discussion on the used Regulation 165/2014, Article of all EU Member States and their ery" has been adopted in the indus- allies be able to defend its interests? Mobility Package we often hear 36, which explicitly states that such citizens. about the losses in the transport documents may be provided only to No one knows the exact figure of descends from the production line it ANGEL DZHAMBAZKI MEP will amount to 24 million euro.

euro. At the same time, it was pro- 88,500 tonnes of carbon emis-Apart from the sporadic statements claimed that one of the goals of the sions will be produced, which is an made on the Mobility Package [an package is to cut red tape and the increase of about 3% of total annual

on to the end user?

eral public in Europe is not aware of

have a negative impact throughout Europe. Companies such as Amazon and BMW are already aware of the negative effects and follow very carefully what is going on with this package so that they can absorb the new conditions in the transportation industry very quickly after the package is adopted as this will affect their business as well.

With the price of transport and logistics rising, the economy will change. The meat.

industry, however, we have not seen the bodies authorized for this type of the hike of the prices! I will give you is immediately loaded onto the truck I am hopeful of the outcome and I inspection (In Bulgaria, such body is a simple example. A car, regardless of to be taken to the next plant or, if the think that we can achieve our comthe EAAA). We should also add the the manufacturer, is often produced product is finished, is delivered to mon goals in defending the Bulgarian cost of non-existing parking, which in five different factories in differ- the wholesaler and/or end user. Due transport business. It will not be easy, ent parts of Europe. If all five deliver- to the return of the trucks, there will but if we continue to fight this battle, The third largest expense will be ies increase their price by 2-3%, this be a mass shortage of transport and as we have all done so far (the Ministry industry, which lists the exact fig- 155 million euro for bringing the means that the price of this car will manufacturers along the chain will be of Transport, represented by Rosen ures for the loss that will be created vehicle back to its registration loca- increase by at least 8-9% if of course forced to build new warehouses. Part Zhelyazkov, and Bulgarian representaafter the introduction of the Mobility tion in 4 weeks. This cost is unnec- it does not increase by more because of their price will surely be passed on tives in the EP and the transport indusessary, and here we can include the of different speculators in the produc- to the end user. The attempts of the try), we will put an end to this mess The study suggests a raise in the negative effect that these empty tion and supply chain. However, this unions, which are supposedly fight- that they tried to impose on us through administrative costs by 40 million courses will generate. Of these, also fully applies to other necessities ing for the well-being of the workers, the so-called Mobility Package.



such as bread, dairy products and even to achieve a victory in the reckless war

try. This means that when the product

they led with the Mobility Package Another problem that most peo- will, in practice, slow down the work-

theconservative.online

by Jack Dickens

ate intellectuals.

about its own dissolution.

Beijing's ruling class is HĂUNTED BY THE FALL OF THE **SOVIET UNION**

Brutal treatment of Hong Kong protests shows the Communist Party is gripped by fear of a Soviet-style loss of ideological control

they unleash, whether it is the aspi-

capitalism has amazed the world. The and resist". process has forged one of the world's and the USSR along with it.

many reasons, such regimes can strug- "Why did the Soviet Union disinte- Beijing's police state. gle to accommodate the forces which grate? Why did the Soviet Communist Party colrations of a new middle class, nation- lapse?" Xi answered that alist movements, or the heightened "An important reason political expectations of highly liter- was that their ideals and beliefs had been shaken... Now, in the vast Leviathan that is It's a profound lesson for the modern Chinese state, the ruling us!" He also added that Communist Party has found that the another "lesson from process of "opening and reform" begun the collapse of the Soviet under President Deng Xiaoping in Union" was that "within 1978 has also begun to unleash unfore- days" the Communist seen dynamics within the country. The Party lost "the instru-Chinese transition from a poor, agrar- ments to exert power" ian communist backwater to a "com- because "nobody was mand and control" form of state-run man enough to stand up

These remarks are echoed by sevanxieties in Beijing. China's rul- the Central Committee of the Chinese doms, Guangdong is slightly different. the balance of power has occurred, prove to be his undoing. ers remain alert to potential move- Communist Party (CCP) upon his ments for political reform which appointment as General Secretary in may accompany this economic mir- January 2013. In extracts, which were acle. Such anxieties which led to the published in the CCP's journal. Oiushi fierce state response to the pro-de- ("seeking truth"), President Xi said mocracy protests which took place in that the Soviet Union fell because it the capital city's Tiananmen Square lost ideological control.

in 1989, a time in which pro-democ- April 2019 was a fitting moment racy movements and demonstrators for this document to appear, because under Europe's Iron Curtain were this month also saw the emergence of gaining ground and momentum. The the current protests which have now Tiananmen protestors were silenced engulfed the island city of Hong Kong. just before the high tide of Europe's Understanding President Xi's reading summer revolutions, which eventu- of the history of the fall of the USSR ally led to the fall of the Berlin wall helps to provide some perspective on the cold brutality with which Beijing The leaders of the Chinese has tried to break the pro-democracy Communist Party in China remain demonstrators in this island city.

haunted by the history of the late The crackdown on Hong Kong's USSR. The Soviet Union dissolved in demonstrators is also rooted in 1989-91, very shortly after Mikhail President Xi's deep mistrust of democ-Gorbachev, a leading advocate of per- racy. In May 1989, while the demonestroika ("restructuring") and glas- strations were ongoing in Tiananmen nost ("opening"), came to power. It square, Xi, who was then a relatively has invited parallels to be drawn with unknown party official in Fujian, the process of opening and reforming drew comparisons between the prounleashed by China's own Communist tests taking place and the anarchy of Party since 1978. In the demise of the China's Cultural Revolution. He is Soviet Union, many in Beijing believe, reported to have said that "This kind resides a modern parable of tremen- of 'big democracy' is not in accord dous political significance. It is the with science, not in accord with the tale of how a once might Communist rule of law, but is instead in accord state lost control of the reins of polit- with superstition, in accord with stuical reform and, in so doing, brought pidity, and the result is major chaos." Now, the determination of the pro-

President Xi Jingping's own analy- testors in Hong Kong has inspired sis of the fall of the Soviet Union is a the disaffected on the Chinese mainprofound expression of this anxiety land. The blaze of revolt has spread

of the most perilous of Beijing's political elite. In a speech much as in Hong Kong in the east and tain retirement. moments for an author- delivered in Guangdong in December Xinjiang in the remote northwest, itarian regime comes 2012, which was leaked by a Chinese people are coming into contact with Guangdong are a microcosm of wider that befell Gorbachev and the Soviet when it tries to reform itself. For journalist, Gao Yu, President Xi asked the paranoid and punitive streaks of changes which have been rumbling Union.

> A truly terrifying police state has emerged from the pessimistic and paranoid reflections of President Xi and his acolytes in Beijing. Throughout China's regions, Xi has made the calculation that, if his regime cannot be loved, then it must be feared. But power based only upon fear is rather brittle – and, in the end, that may prove to be his undoing.

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leading economies over a period of eral other key speeches delivered by are centred around preserving the tion which has led to a rise in strikes be loved, then it must be feared. But forty years of hyper-industrial growth. President Xi. In April 2019, the con- city's democratic institutions as for higher wages in manufacturing power based only upon fear is rather However, it has also heightened tents of an address delivered by Xi to well as its historic common law free- centres across the country. A shift in brittle - and, in the end, that may

The province is part of the story of providing workers with greater lever-China's rapid industrial and economic age over their employers in many expansion since 1978. Its capital city, regions. Guangzhou, has been one of the leading cities spearheading China's rise to tests reveals something important economic greatness. In the space of a about the trajectory of the Chinese generation, it emerged as a centre of state since 2015. There is a sad symnew mechanised industry, a net con- metry of a kind between the persumer of people and capital, the home secution of Muslim minorities in of the factories and workshops fuel- north-eastern Xinjiang and the demling China's industrial expansion.

towns of Guangdong have recently Hong Kong's democrats are besieged become a hotbed of unrest amongst by a regime seeking to root out what workers who are now demanding it sees as ideological nonconformists. better standards of living. China Labour Bulletin (CLB), a Hong President Xi has wielded a series of Kong-based organisation who anal- anti-corruption trials against poweryse workers' rights across China, ful rivals in order to slowly concenhave recorded 129 instances of trate more political power in his own industrial strikes and protests this hands. He has also overseen the estabyear. These are being led by many lishment of new forms of surveillance workers of retiring age who feel that software and data collection techthey have contributed to China's nologies, which are now being used economic miracle over the last gen- by Beijing's intelligence services to istory suggests that one which has gripped the highest circles to Guangdong province. Here, as eration, but who now face an uncer- screen entire populations for signs

beneath the surface of the Chinese

to dry up. Demand landmass.

Beijing's response to these pro onstrators in the East. Xiniiang's Guangzhou and the surrounding Muslims, Guangdong's workers, and

Across this decade, China's of political dissidence. Such is Xi's The events taking place in determination not to follow the fate

> At the same time, however, Xi's gov economy since at ernment has in another sense been least 2014. In that continuing the work of Deng Xiaoping year, when GDP further liberalising the management growth began to of the Chinese economy by devolving slow to more mod- powers for economic decision-making est levels. China to provinces and local governments. It reached a "turn- has been trying to strike a balance ing point" in which between centralised political power the pool of excess and economic growth, while mainlabourers from the taining ideological control of China's countryside began expanding population across a vast

for migrant labour A truly terrifying police state has in the industrial emerged from the pessimistic and partowns has con- anoid reflections of President Xi and tinued to grow, his acolytes in Beijing. Throughout but the supply of China's regions, Xi has made the cal-Yet while Hong Kong's protests labourers has not kept pace, a situa- culation that, if his regime cannot



Cut the down to size

'm going to be myself, and therefore different." In those 66 words Christine Lagarde, the new president of the European Central Bank, speaking at her first ECB press conference, asked journalists not to compare her with her predecessors. Immediately beforehand, the ECB governing council had held all three of its policy rates at record lows: its headline borrowing rate remains at zero, the negative interest rate of - 0.5 per cent for depositor banks is retained and the ECB's marginal lending facility for banks seeking short-term loans will still be charged at a 0.25 per cent rate. That is hardly a differentiation from her predecessor Mario Draghi.

The ECB governing council stated that it expects the key ECB rates to remain at their present "or lower levels" until inflation reaches "a level sufficiently close to, but below, 2%". President Lagarde claimed to detect "some initial signs of stabilization" and a "mild increase in underlying inflation". Yet the inflation targets for the three years 2020-2022 are 1.1 per cent, 1.4 per cent (down from 1.5 per cent) and 1.6 per cent respectively. None of those figures can reasonably be regarded as close to, but below, 2 per cent. Growth forecasts for the same three years are 1.1 per cent (down from 1.2), and 1.4 per cent in both the later years, reflecting an expectation of no increase in growth between 2021 and 2022.

Christine Lagarde must be using an extremely powerful microscope to detect even a mild increase of any significance in underlying inflation. There is a discrepancy between her reassuring remarks and the fiscal realities. Of these, the most disturbing is the fact that the ECB is still making bond purchases totalling €20bn a month. in an open-ended commitment – the controversial Parthian shot by Mario Draghi, who resumed quantitative easing, against the advice of ECB officials, just nine months after he had supposedly ended it. There is a further echo of her predecessor in President Lagarde's insistence that the ECB stands ready to adjust all its instruments, as appropriate, to ensure inflation returns towards its target: the resonance of Draghi's "whatever it takes" is unavoidable.

But if Christine Lagarde's leadership of the ECB resembles Mario Draghi's policy in those obvious respects, much more concerning is the one aspect of her agenda that notably diverges from his. He was focussed - sometimes to the point of tunnel vision. Christine Lagarde, in contrast, is showing signs of a dangerously diffuse approach to her responsibilities. Her announcement of an ECB strategic review, starting in January, is not in itself undesirable. There has been no such reappraisal since 2003 and it makes sense, in the present impasse, to review inflation targets and how to achieve them.

But this review, as envisioned by Christine Lagarde, will be anything but focussed. It will include in its eclectic remit "the enormous challenge of climate change" and the question of economic inequality. This is a major mistake. The ECB needs to concentrate its mind on the challenge that has so far defeated it, of restoring price stability. That urgent priority can only be undermined by addressing distractions such as climate change and inequality. Climate change is a hugely controversial and amorphous issue; its universal characteristic is that it devours unlimited amounts of money like a black hole.

Christine Lagarde is indulging in displacement activity rather than tackling the ECB's core problem; invoking climate change is a diversion, putting out virtue-signalling chaff to distract from more immediate concerns. This is a classic example of ECB overreach, on the worst model of EU institutions. It is provoking opposition both inside the ECB and externally. Bundesbank President Jens Weidmann has already said he would view "very critically" any attempt to use monetary policy to combat climate change, which he sees as the responsibility of individual states.

Despite her time at the IMF, Christine Lagarde is the first ECB president with no experience in central banking. She is a lawyer and politician, in a post that arguably requires a banking professional to engage with intractable monetary problems. It is doubtful that the ECB has enough firepower left to conquer inflation-related challenges or any future Eurozone crisis. The new regime in Frankfurt does not inspire confidence.

The art of the GREEN DEAL

by Pieter Cleppe

The EU's shaky track record on environmental policy means Ursula von der Leyen's flagship policy is unlikely to be a success

wants to come up with a lions of euros. raises quite a few

doubts about the EU's performance when it comes to protecting environment Not to mention the considerable waste of financial resources the EU's biggest spending area - agriculture entails. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has led to years of overproduction. the antithesis of sustainability.

More than 2,500 scientists across the EU have urged

the EU "to act on the science, and the EU has enforced policies requir- meant that a policy intended to that those keen to test the benefits the loads can be inspected.

European of a more sustainable model will be Incoherence, stasis and poorly Commission, led by facing competitors funded by the planned choices feed into the EU's pol-Ursula von der Leyen, EU to the tune of billions and bil- icies on CO2 emissions. Long before

"European Green Deal", which is Building a more sustainable envi- and trade". the EU had its own version. only part of a whole range of new EU ronmental policy requires opening up which is called the "Emission Trading measures intended to protect the the CAP to new ideas - a similar pov-System" (ETS). The central idea of environment. The Commission is erty in aspiration dogs the EU's fisher- ETS was to force companies that emit attempting to present itself as a green ies policies. This could lead to a major CO2 to provide compensation and champion. Past evidence, however, environmental disaster. For years, at the same time allow them to buy

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The Commission is attempting to present itself as a green champion. Past

evidence, however, raises quite a few doubts about the EU's performance when it comes to protecting the environment. Not to mention the considerable waste of financial resources the EU's biggest spending area – agriculture – entails. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has led to years of overproduction, the antithesis of sustainability.

undertake a far-reaching reform of ing fishermen to discard perfectly fine limit CO2 emissions has ended up the EU's CAP without delay." They fish in case they have reached cer-providing an unfair advantage to the argue that EU subsidies financially tain quotas. According to opponents support the so-called "intensive" of the CFP, this is mainly the result has been known for years, but reforms agriculture model, which they think of the EU setting quotas centrally, have proven very difficult. harms biodiversity. Whether one instead of opting for the US or Nordic In parallel, protections for the clisupports the current model of agri- model whereby all fish which has been mate have fallen by the wayside - a culture or not, it's clearly a problem caught should be brought on land, and product of large-scale EU failure. The

Barack Obama came up with U.S. "cap the right to emit, so

to make sure CO2 is emitted by those able to do it with the lowest economic cost.

the conservative.online

In reality, how major indusever, trial firms often managed to convince politicians to provide them with free emission rights and threaten to scrap jobs otherwise. In this way, the ETS distorted fair competition as it ended up supporting big manufacturers that emit a lot of CO2. This

biggest emitters of CO2. The problem

EU and European governments

concern.



agreeing to a voluntary CO2 target for increased to almost 60% in 2011

were more fuel-efficient and emitted scrutinize its own polsion of soot, particulates, and nitrogen that the policy actually

The point here is not so much who's to indirect land use right and who's wrong in this very changes tied to biofutechnical debate, with serious argu- els, with activities like ments being made by each side. It's clearing grassland and mostly that top-down control of envi- forests negating any ronmental policy has been leading to cuts in greenhouse epic u-turns and great uncertainty, gasses. Meanwhile, also imposing great costs on industry. tax incentives and Today, the policy consensus at the subsidies had been EU level is to promote electric cars. introduced. Dominish explains that "the min- emissions."

ment. The EU promoted diesel by environmentally friendly.

superior choice when it comes to CO2 than traditional fossil fuels.

cars. In any case, even if diesel engines external report it comm sioned to pending.

less CO2 than other engines, emis- icies concluded in 2011 oxides (NOx) is also an environmental caused higher emissions. This was due

through regulations and tax treat- declared a certain technology to be woodforenergy, which is what biomass Solar panels have been estimated to "ease the transition". Also within the ultimately comes down to, typically create 300 times more toxic waste per EU, a similar arrangement is being The EU once designated biofuels as emits 1.5 times more CO2 than coal unit of energy than nuclear energy. In planned, in the form of a so-called vehicles that was largely in line with "climate friendly". Apart from the and 3 times more than natural gas. countries like China, India and Ghana, "Just Transition Fund", which would what diesel technology could meet. fact these were also blamed for higher Opponents argue that to qualify this toxic waste is often burned, in contain up to €35 billion euro, to Partly as a result of this, diesel sales food prices in developing countries, biomass as "renewable" energy fails to order to salvage the valuable copper support poorer member states like soared. In 1990, only 10% of new car they have been accused of destroying take into account the scientific wires for resale. The resulting toxic Poland, which is still heavily reliant registrations were for diesel cars. This habitats such as tropical rainforests. evidence showing that forest biomass fumes are known to cause cancer and on fossil fuels. NGO Transport and Environment harvesting and combustion for energy birth defects. Diesel has fallen out of favour, even (T&E) has claimed that using biofuels purposes exacerbates climate change In its climate policies, the EU support schemes does not inspire if some argue that it actually may be a is actually worse for the environment by causing deforestation outside of has been consistently promot- confidence. A study published in Europe. A court case at the highest EU ing the described technologies, Nature in 2015, concluded that due emissions than petrol cars and per- After the EU Commission had put court challenging the EU's definition while nuclear energy, despite its to weak environmental oversight of haps even a better choice than electric its weight behind biofuels in 2003 an of biomass as "renewable" is currently very low level of C02 emissions, has the UN's 1997 carbon credit scheme,

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The question is whether an organization with such a questionable track record when it comes to protecting the environment should be trusted when it comes up with new grand policy schemes which basically amount to "more of the same".

Few listen to dissident voices, like the According to the damning report, solar energy. It's been widely doc- imposing a fixed EU target for a elections. In its brand-new plans for International Energy Agency, which the EU Commission cannot hide umented that hazardous materials certain technology to reduce CO2 a "European Green Deal", the EU has warned that driving electric cars - behind claims it wasn't aware of the are needed to produce solar panels. emissions, in this case "renewable" Commission is pushing for more which enjoy tax breaks - won't make impact: "There was little scientific Also the environmental downsides of energy, whereby defining what this regulation, more spending, more a dent in global carbon emissions, evidence available in 2003 that sup- wind turbines, as for example visual amounts to isn't very obvious. This taxes, more protectionism, more topand may even increase pollution lev- ported the claim that a European impacts, the noise produced by the has forced EU member states into down control and picking winners in a els. The environmental impact is also biofuels target would be guaran- rotor blades or the deaths of birds and expensive and unworkable policies complex technological environment. a worry, as senior researcher Elsa teed to bring down greenhouse gas bats that fly into the rotors, are widely and it has caused cheaper methods of The question is whether an known.

able energy technologies and electric energy used in Europe to come from are no proper plans on how to deal Climate Agreement, to which the protecting the environment should vehicles already impacts wildlife bio- "renewable" sources by 2020 and bio- with the waste stemming from the EU signed up, foresees that the be trusted when it comes up with new diversity". It looks like once again, mass currently represents almost 60% production of solar panels and wind world's developed countries pro- grand policy schemes which basically EU policy makers will need to make of renewable energy consumption in turbines. This is expected to hit vide developing countries with at least amount to "more of the same".

encouraged diesel cars over the years, an embarrassing u-turn after having the EU. It's estimated that burning 78 million metric tonnes by 2050. \$100 billion a year until 2025, so to

well as electric cars the past. the environment.

The track record of these kinds of been on the defensive at the EU level. there were "perverse incentives" The EU's support For some industrial plants in Russia for diesel and biofu- to increase emissions, so they could els has already been then be paid to reduce them. In revised. Given the other words: financially rewarding abundant evidence, those that are lagging behind has the policy choices to proven to be a tricky strategy. Yet, support biomass, wind the EU is enthusiastically doubling and solar energy, as down on this, ignoring the lessons of

may be seen as grave Last but not least, in its climate errors, from the per- policies, the EU is not above handspective of protecting ing out EU subsidies to fossil fuels or withholding embarrassing reports At the heart of the on its own policies from publication Then there is of course wind and problem is that the EU has opted for until after the European Parliament reducing CO2 emission to be ignored. organization with such a questionable ing of many metals used for renew- An EU target requires 20% of the Unlike with nuclear waste - there Furthermore, the 2015 Paris track record when it comes to

THE WEST WILL SOONBEAS **FATALISTIC AND** DYSEUNCILONAT **AS RUSSIA** by Johan Ha

t's an unsettling experience nothing that interested her less than to be driven through Moscow politics. at hell-for-leather speed by a Georgian cabbie with suspihe indignantly explains the Russian- days? Georgian conflict to you with his head turned over his shoulder

I can't say that much of his explanation stuck.

This was a few years back and I had reading the papers". been asked to lecture at Moscow State be no intelligible reason. Granted, Dostoevsky, to curb any frivolity. I do speak Swedish and it was the

Swedish subsection of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Area Studies that invited me. But still, why invite a cvnical. constantly quipping columnist to lead the students astray?

It didn't make any sense

The actual explanation made even less sense. This particular group of students were learning Swedish largely by reading and

painstakingly translating my columns. They solemnly sat by their desks and, pointless in Russian.

up. My wife and I flew to Moscow.

sardonic irony. The students all room. If you did the floor was immesmiled.

reception. Partially inspired by my asked our guide to tell the three want it. You don't need to get it at spe-Georgian cabbie I tried to talk a lit- sturdy babushkas, who with fuming cific times of day anymore. But there's tle bit about politics with the female resentment managed the corridor, something else too. professor. It was a no go. Next to about the leak. He was reluctant, but A kind of fatigue. A sense of alien-"buziness", she explained, there was eventually sighed deeply and went ation. A growing feeling of politics and

a more general angle: what did the dignity ciously dilated pupils, especially while Moscow papers write about these

> She looked more than a bit affronted.

"Really", she said with perfect Swedish diction, "I wouldn't dream of

University. At first there seemed to of course. Pushkin. Maybe the odd The chocolate was inedible. We didn't keep in touch.

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I think we're going Russian. The West is having a Candide-moment and millions of people will finally become so exhausted that anyone who tries to get them to do anything more than cultivating their own gardens will be met

by derision and contempt. The world will have to take care of itself. Or, as the Russians say, "Let it pour".

Our hotel wasn't, strictly speak- is really way behind us in the glorious ing, a hotel. It was a room off a cor- West, Maybe Russia is the future. with much deference, turned jokes ridor in one of Stalin's Seven Sisters. they didn't understand about people the giant skyscrapers that tells you been unthinkable that anyone among they've never heard of into what I only what Manhattan would have looked my acquaintances wouldn't follow the can assume was something even more like, if Joe Kennedy and Charles news. They are, mostly, middle class, Lindbergh had gotten their fas- middle aged college graduates with Of course, it was too bizarre to pass cist-state. There was nothing wrong incomes modestly above average. The with the room. At least as long as you salt of the earth and the backbone of I delivered a lecture stuffed with didn't turn the tap on in the bath- society, as it were. took comprehensive notes. No one diately covered in a couple of inches that they skip the news. They may not of water.

ing of a man who knows he's about lunatics boobies and fanatics. Having established that I tried to lose yet another fraction of his

"Let it pour."

In the tax-free shop at the airport I bought a chocolate-box picturing So what did she read? Tolstoy, Stalin at the helm of the Ship of State.

They all had the same Who can blame them? basic and somewhat very long time before Russia becomes anything like a working democracy, or even a working society. There is simply no sense of civic pride, still less of civic duty.

So, no surprises there. But what I have come to question lately is if Russia

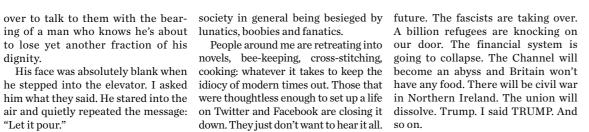
Just a few years ago it would have

Today it's more common than not even read a paper every day. It's partly Afterwards there was a kind of When we were checking out I because news is always there, if you

down. They just don't want to hear it all. so on

for decades - they have good reason game? On the whole, it was a very fruitful to do so. Six out of ten viewers say

And why should it get any better? trite point: it will be a Politics today is all hysteria.



When Sky News decides to start a Who could possibly stand a barchannel without news about Brexit - rage like this for very long? Is there the most important issue in Britain any way out, except pulling out of the

I think we're going Russian. The stay. I remember getting at least half that news about Brexit makes them West is having a Candide-moment and a dozen columns out depressed. Four out of ten feel pow- millions of people will finally become of my visit to Moscow, erless at the mere mention of Brexit, so exhausted that anyone who tries to get them to do anything more than cultivating their own gardens will be met by derision and contempt. The The world is coming to an end. world will have to take care of itself.



theconservative.online

scoring.

project.

their respective oars in.



ten" to mention links to the insurance more. industry, a key player on pensions, on

ern Rust Belt, once a Chirac Cabinet himself mentioned

plan, if Delevove had been left to a very few people. it. Unfortunately, as contradictory rumours on the reform's precise con- instead of reassuring tents started circulating, Macron public opinion, the fog started answering some of them off of contradictory promthe cuff, without consulting with his ises ended up foster-High Commissioner. He also sent ing a rising panic. The out a squad of Cabinet Ministers who still-unknown reform each, unsynchronised, began deny- took on a hydra-like ing various hypothetical changes to quality: all groups of pensions. Prime Minister Édouard French workers found Philippe, Budget Minister Gérald something in it to fear Darmanin and several others all put and oppose. France's

which you can sabotage for 42 different categories of employcollective bargaining over ees, mostly from the public sector, France's Byzantine pen- ranging from train drivers to opera National Convention, without naming Socialist-Communist coalition in Jesuit school in Amiens. sions system. Having an appointed stage hands, sailors, teachers, air traf- them, causing a fatal coalition to rise 1981, had lowered retirement age from Delevoye was meant to soften up negotiator exposed for having "forgot- fic controllers, firemen, EDF staff, and against him since all began to fear they 65 to 60. This was both a demagogic public opinion. Instead, while he

> There was more: physically-hard to new entrants to

Jean-Paul Delevoye, 72, an old- these professions. style former Senator from the north- Emmanuel Macron Minister and a long-time presi- the "clause du granddent of the worthy Economic and père", which in effect Social Council, was named High would delay his Commissioner for Pensions Reform reform by a generatwo years ago. He was tasked by tion. Then he stopped Macron, cagey after one year of saying it, after Yellow Vests angry demonstrations, Delevoye complained. to "consult" and produce a reform No, pensions would not be lowered - or That might have been a cunning they would be only for

No wonder that

some 15% of the workforce. They in the revolutionary assembly, the retirees. In 1980, there were ten active the retirement age to 62. He was then pension reforms?

by Anne-Elisabeth Moutet

would get the guillotine.

his official statement of interests is jobs would be exempt, it was said. France. The country's pay-as-you-go the birth rate was falling, while pen-have long been part of the consenthe kind of own goal only President There would be a grandfather clause: system, which worked very well for sioners lived longer - 74 years in 1980, sual national Kabuki, he found him-Emmanuel Macron makes a habit of the new system would only apply several decades in the high-inflation up from 69.8 in 1960. Medical prog-self in a roiling sea of fears and bitter

"

Pensions reform is a touchy issue in France. The country's pay-as-you-go system, which worked very well for several decades in the high-inflation post-war era, started flagging around the 1980s. Demographics inexorably eroded contributions paid into the collective pot

to be immediately redistributed to an increasing number of retirees. In 1980, there were ten active workers paying in for two pensioners. Today, they pay for three. In 2050, they will have to pay for six pensioners – an unsustainable burden without changing the national system's parameters.

No, the retirement age (62) would the witty Gérard Araud, called it the the 1980s. Demographics inexorably principle of "minimum service" in Delevoye has merely announced he not be upped to 64. No, reforming "Thermidor Syndrome": it echoes eroded contributions paid into the public sector during strikes. He will resign from his board seat. The "special regimes" would not apply that moment in July 1794 when collective pot to be immediately redis- then with stood a couple of weeks of consensus in Paris is that he is toast, immediately. These regimes cover Robespierre threatened his enemies tributed to an increasing number of demonstrations, and managed to raise but will thawt also apply to Macron's

workers paying in for two pensioners. Today, they pay for three. In 2050, the rest of his reforms were forgotten they will have to pay for six pensionparameters.

and a damaging decision: baby-boom- pursued the protracted ritual con-

ress has now pushed expectancy even further, to 82.6 in 2019.

Juppé tried to ram he would never give ulate. by the experience, presidency.

hit by the 2008 financial crisis, and Come Emmanuel Macron and his ers - an unsustainable burden with- cohort of thirty-something clone-like out changing the national system's technocrats: his platform included pension reform, and the Holy Grail This is where we hit the "touchy" of a uniform national pension syspart. In 1995, a newly-elected tem. Even though minutes after being President Chirac asked his PM, the elected, the 39-year-old President stiff-necked Alain Juppé, a pure tech- started affecting the enigmatic, connocratic alumnus of the exact same servative mien and clothing of the late top civil service that would later pro- François Mitterrand, he remained duce Emmanuel Macron, for struc- aware that he needed a rounder, tural cuts in France's expensive social more seasoned figure to reassure welfare system. France spent 28.3% future pensioners. His eye alighted or of GDP on it then, but this has risen Delevoye, who was exactly the kind to 31.2% now. This was and remains of second-tier centre-right politician the highest level out of all OECD he had been collecting in his big-tent countries. This naturally included government. Macron may even have pensions, especially since François remembered that Delevoye attended, Mitterrand, upon winning with a decades before him, the same private

Pensions reform is a touchy issue in ers were beginning to retire en masse; fabs with France's main unions that hostility. Every new envoy to the front French average life lines troubled the waters further, even the popular Education Minister Jean Michel Blanquer, Macron's last trump card, a man intent on restoring the through his reform. basics in French schools. Blanquer The French unions promised a hefty bonus to France's responded with a admittedly badly-paid teachers to month-long general "make up" for their pensions' reform. strike in which most which only served to convince them public services ground that it would significantly cut into to a halt. Having sworn their retirement annuities.

The actual bones of the reform are in, Juppé was ordered due to be announced this Wednesday, by Chirac, a better after another day of protest and less courageous strikes. On Monday, Le Parisien politician, to capit- newspaper revealed that Delevoye Afterwards, sits on the board of an insurance Chirac, traumatised graduate school financed by the industry, who stand to gain from the never lifted a finger to Macron reform as more and more reform anything in the workers are encouraged to invest in ensuing 12 years of his private pension schemes. While his board position is pro bono, the school Nicolas Sarkozy fol- is largely financed by an adult edulowed: cannily, the cation guango which Delevove has hyperactive "Sarko" billed for almost €200,000 over the former Ambassador to Washington, post-war era, started flagging around first had Parliament vote into law the last 4 years. At the time of writing,

AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S REFUSAL to acknowledge genocide is a disgrace

has denied that country's military testimonies of their experiences. acted with "genocidal intent" against the West African state of The Gambia.

erals launched a "security clearance

obel Peace Laureate and Bangladesh. The Rohingya men, de facto Prime Minister of women, and children who have sur-Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kvi vived and fled have given harrowing

The government of Myanmar has instead portraved the events in "ethnic cleansing". The UN presented and fair elections between 1989-2010. the country's Muslim minority - the long refused to recognise that the Rakhine as an "internal armed con- an inquiry in May 2019 testifying to She spent fifteen of these twenty-one Rohingyas, Suu Kyi was speaking in the Rohingya, who are Bengali in their flict" between the army and insur- the "repression and human rights vio- years under house arrest. Hague on 11 December 2019, where she origins, have a right to citizenship in gents led by the Arakan Rohingya lations on a massive scale". has been called to answer questions by Buddhist-majority Burma. The mil- Salvation Army (ARSA). She admitthe UN's International Court of Justice itary campaign in 2017 was only the ted that government troops may not advocacy of democracy and human after a genocide hearing was initiated by latest of a series of crimes committed have distinguished "clearly enough rights in a country governed by a miliagainst Rohingya people in the coun- between fighters and civilians", but tary regime and divided between dispa-In August 2017, Myanmar's gen- try going back to 1978.

operation" in Rakhine, in the north the prosecution of painting a "mis- er-insurgency operations".

by Jack Dickens

In the Hague, Suu Kyi accused to restore order and conduct "count-

of Burma, an operation which left leading and incomplete picture of Suu Kyi's testimony flies in the face struggle for democracy and human less than a betrayal of the principles of thousands dead and forced 740,000 the situation" in Rakhine state, the of the evidence gathered by UN inves- rights", lauding "her unflagging efforts" moral courage which won her the Nobel Rohingva to flee to neighbouring home of Myanmar's Muslims where tigators who have visited Rakhine to support "ethnic conciliation by Prize nearly three decades ago.

state, in the north of Myanmar. The peaceful means," Not so very long ago in UN High Commissioner for Human 2011, an inspiring biopic film called The Rights in September 2017 described Lady was made about Suu Kvi's experithe atrocities have taken place. She the military's actions as amounting to ence in Burma during her fight for free

Now, Suu Kyi is apologising for the Suu Kyi was once famous for her very military who enforced her long periods of arrest. It is tragic to see that Suu Kyi has now decided that the human rights that she struggled for over such a argued that the military was trying rate ethnic and religious groups. In 1991, long and painful period of time, that she the Nobel Committee awarded Suu Kyi sacrificed so much to defend, do not also their Peace Prize "for her non-violent apply to Burma's Muslims. It is nothing



Chateaubriand THE ROMANTIC WHO "CONSERVATIVE"

In the last of his essays this year on conservative thinkers, Gerald Warner reflects on the complex and enduring legacy of Chateaubriand, novelist, philosopher, politician

by Gerald Warner

and diplomatic contribution to the *Atala*, set in the wilds Counter-Revolution but, above all, of North America, an intellectual one. He dominated became a popular French writing for the first half of success, its romantic the 19th century, converted many style signalling the of the French back to Catholicism dawn of a new literand delivered the coup-de-grâce to $% f(x)=\int dx \, dx$ ary era. Napoleon Bonaparte with a single pamphlet. He was the first to coin of Christianity was the term "Conservative".

Chateaubriand was born into an France by storm. old Breton noble family in 1768 and The timing was perat age 17 entered the army. At the fect. The Pseudooutbreak of the French Revolution Enlightenment had he at first felt sympathetic. In 1791 been discredited by he left the turbulence of France to the excesses of the visit America where he claimed to Revolution and a have met George Washington and to new leisured society have lived with a Native American was emerging that tribe; both those claims are doubted deplored the destruction and vulby historians, though his American garity that had characterised the visit furnished him with material for Republic. Most importantly, three novels.

resolved to emigrate and join the in 1801, since he valued Army of the Princes being formed the Church as a stabiby Louis XVI's brothers to fight the lising influence on revolution. Wounded at the siege society. He thereof Thionville he contracted small- fore approved of pox and after many misadventures Chateaubriand's arrived at his uncle's household attempt on Jersey in a state of delirium. On re-popularise recovery, he went to London where Catholicism. he lived in poverty, surviving by doing translation work. In 1797 he published his first book, Essai sur les than that: he Révolutions, which attracted little redefined attention. Chateaubriand was now whole of existence reading English literature and fell by the very criteria under the spell of Milton's Paradise that had been most *Lost* which he later translated into emphatically rejected French

In exile, Chateaubriand learned of *Genius of Christianity or*, his mother's death and how grieved The spirit and beauty of the she had been in her last days by the Christian religion, is divided religiously sceptical tone of his essay into four parts: Dogmas and on revolutions; shortly after, his sisdeath's interpreter impressed me. I the heart: I wept and I believed."

In 1802 The Genius published and took

Bonaparte had concluded a On his return to France he Concordat with the Pope

Chateaubriand went further the by the *philosophes*. The

Tenets, The Poetic of Christianity, ter also died. He was stricken with The Fine Arts and Literature, and remorse, reconverted to Catholicism Worship. As those largely secular the new Romanticism that Walter "Those two voices from the tomb," had progressed beyond traditional effected wide-scale, if patchy, relihe wrote, "that death which acted as Catholic apologetics (though that gious conversions. discipline was also prominent in

is talent was matched Chateaubriand began compos- religion with the scenes of nature in retirement at his country estate. mainly devoted to a devastating only by his ego and the ing his greatest work, Le génie du and the passions of the human heart Then, with the defeat of Napoleon in critique of the Napoleonic desvolatility of his tem- Christianisme, which occupied him could penetrate even minds that 1814, came another opportunity to potism, but a contrasting theme perament reflected his for four years, during which he might have remained impervious astonish France. While the Austrian he emphasised was "liberty". He

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Chateaubriand's great preoccupation was freedom of the press, which he described as necessary to prevent the "triple despotism of democracy, aristocracy, and crown". He believed in the authority of public opinion, to a degree that nowadays might almost be called populist. Legitimacy was the primary principle of his political creed, but his legitimism was liberal in tone.

Bourbons. Overnight it killed Bonaparte Bonaparte recovered

chamber: "A door suddenly opened: executive. silently there entered vice lean-

> d'Outre-tombe. Before

reached served as ambassadynasty

1822 to 1824.

Although Chateaubriand accepted became a Christian. I did not yield, I the work) to do something far more diplomatic posts under Bonaparte, and Bonald, spent more time prac- Chamber of Peers and all pensions, admit, to great supernatural enlight- audacious: he used aesthetics as an he resigned in 1804 after Napoleon tising politics than writing about reducing himself to poverty and a enment: my conviction came from instrument of evangelisation and, engineered the kidnapping and judi- it. His political philosophy gave reclusive existence until his death in even more startlingly, he succeeded. cial murder of a Bourbon prince, the primacy to religion and the rights 1848. Despite all his apparent con-The consequences of that A book with section headings such Duc d'Enghien. Chateaubriand spent of the Church. His pamphlet De tradictions, his ancien régime sense change of heart were immense. as The harmonies of the Christian the remainder of the Napoleonic era Buonaparte et des Bourbons was of honour remained consistent.

Buonaparte et des that Frenchmen had traditionally enjoyed under their kings.

Chateaubriand expounded his off any hope of the political philosophy mainly in one dvnas- work: On the Monarchy according ty's survival. Louis to the Charter. in 1816. The Charter XVIII said its fifty granted by Louis XVIII on his return pages had been worth to France in 1814 was the bed-100.000 troops to rock of Chateaubriand's concept him. During the of France's constitutional future. Hundred Days, when Bonald had denounced the Charter briefly as a work of "folly and darkness", power, but Chateaubriand supported it. Chateaubriand fol- Since it had been granted by the lowed Louis XVIII King it preserved the royal prerogainto temporary exile tive. The Charter based representaat Ghent. There, tive government on four pillars: the while he was waiting prerogative, the Chamber of Peers, in the King's ante- the Chamber of Deputies and the

The King was inviolable, any ing on the arm of crime, M de faults in government were attribut-Talleyrand walking with the able to ministers: but the King was support of M. Fouché." not absolute. In fact, the only ruler That vignette of two of France to have been truly absolute of the worst scoun- was Bonaparte. Chateaubriand's drels of the age was stay in England had inclined him to just one of innu- that country's constitutional model, merable recollec- but with a more Catholic apotheotions published sis of the King as Son of St Louis and posthumously in father of his subjects. Chateaubriand Chateaubriand's had an ineradicable distrust of min- $M \notin m \circ i r e s$ istries: when he joined with the Ultras in attacking the government he after it had dissolved the Ultrathat royalist "Chambre Introuvable" he tomb he had a did so because the executive had crowded life. Made emasculated an institution of reprea peer of France, he sentative government. His other great preoccupation

dor to several coun- was freedom of the press, which he tries, including Prussia described as necessary to prevent and Britain. Yet his rela- the "triple despotism of democracy, tions with the restored aristocracy, and crown". He believed were turbulent. in the authority of public opinion, to In 1818 he became editor of a adegree that nowadays might almost new anti-government newspaper be called populist. Legitimacy was he named Le Conservateur, thus the primary principle of his politiinventing the term "conservative". cal creed, but his legitimism was liband resolved to make expiation. headings indicate, Chateaubriand Scott would develop. Chateaubriand Reconciled to the government, he eral in tone. When the monarchy fell was French foreign minister from in 1830 - after a crisis involving censorship of the press - Chateaubriand Chateaubriand, unlike Maistre resigned his membership of the



autumn of 1943.

conflict. Europe and the world.

above a few days later.

martial?

The action led to the Military Cross. was achieved. Buckle Italy that winter and the following one reported very little was a grind - one in which Michael positive - two Guardsmen hit, and which was reciprocated. Asked one was blown up in the mountains above Franco Zeffirelli, a self-appointed liai-Bologna, he abandoned a wounded son officer. Guardsman, Terry, who later died. In The war left an enduring reflec-

identity as a Romantic writer rather returned to France in 1800 and took to Bossuet. The glorification of the and Russian victors prevaricated meant, of course, something very than a philosopher, yet François- advantage of the amnesty for émigrés Middle Ages, of Gothic architecture, over the restoration of Louis XVIII, different from the revolutionary René, Vicomte de Chateaubriand promulgated by the Consulate under of human feeling brought into har- on 30 March, 1814 Chateaubriand "liberty, equality, fraternity": the made not only a military, political Bonaparte. That same year his novel mony with the divine, all proclaimed published a pamphlet entitled De protection of basic human dignity

Sir Michael Howard THE GREATEST PRACTITIONER OF MILITARY HISTO rofessor Sir Michael Howard.

who has just died at 97, was the greatest practitioner of military history, an inspiring teacher and academic innovator, and a disarmingly funny, warm and observant friend – almost to the last.

He took military history out of a cul de sac and made it part of general historical and humanities studies in half a dozen countries. His approach was based on direct, and brutal experience. He won a Military Cross leading his first platoon into action after the landings at Salerno in Italy in the

He had an outstanding gift for language - penetrating, elegant and brief. On one occasion I heard him sum up the Second World War - "five regional wars wrapped in two global conflicts" in 50 minutes. A few years later I heard him pull the same trick, in 2014, on the origins of the First World War. He covered the subject in 45 minutes. There was nothing banal or second hand, and not a word or pause out of place.

It was all helped by a private and public persona that was a touch theatrical, a delivery with a faint hint of the clipped tones of Noel Coward.

He educated the great, not least Margaret Thatcher, about soldiers and the military. He also taught the military about education for the contemporary world. He could change his views, on nuclear disarmament for instance, and embrace the new - foreseeing years ago the influence of climate change, migration, cyber and genetics on present and future

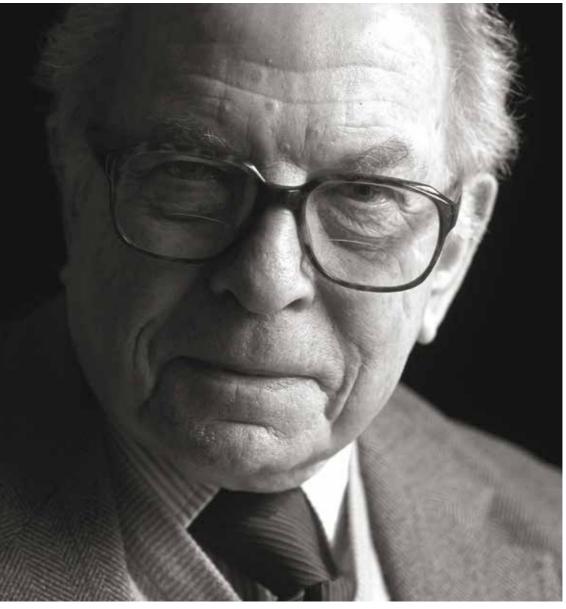
He was born into a comfortably well-off middle class family in Dorset, his father from Quaker stock and his mother from a wealthy German Jewish family - which had a profound influence on his view of Britain,

After being educated at private school, Wellington, in Berkshire, he took a truncated history degree before signing up for service with the Coldstream Guards. After training in with astonishing fran-North Africa, his battalion was among kness in his slim autothe first across the beach at Salerno biography, Captain in 1943. His first action was leading Professor. The Italian his platoon against well entrenched campaign had its machine gun positions in the hills touches of camp, too.

"I imagined I was a hero in some "Dickie" Buckle, later Western movie," he later told me. "I the famed balletomane suppose it was luck - get your gal- and critic for the New lantry award first and then you can get York Times. Returning away with some horrible mistakes - I from a failed fighting sometimes thought I deserved a court reconnaissance patrol

Academic who advised the great and the good will be remembered for his outstanding contribution to the world of letters

by Robert Fox



This is recorded A fellow officer was Buckle was asked what

One incident haunted him, too, for recorded driving round in taxis, holdthe rest of his life. When his patrol ing hands with the precocious teenage him."

himself - though had he stayed, the Germans were so bloody good." destruction of the whole patrol team. an enduring regard for the Guards, London, where he came to found the Germanv and France

"

He educated the great, not least Margaret Thatcher, about soldiers and the military. He also taught the military about education for the contemporary world. He could change his views, on nuclear disarmament for instance, and embrace the new – foreseeing years ago the influence of climate change, migration, cyber and genetics on present and future conflict.

was wounded and came down with terrible weather - "but the violets day for his favourite general of the ing production of books, which malaria, which affected him for years. were divine." In Florence, Michael war, he replied "Bill Slim - outstand- have his unique brand of clar- looking at this for a very long time." ing because his men simply loved ity and succinctness. He trans-

Oxford, and a "lousy degree - I was and it is still the standard English flow was, "jolly good company. Must enjoying myself too much," and version today. His study of the go. I have a train to catch." his autobiography he frankly blames tion: "We could never work out why the pursuit of academe - but with a Franco-Prussian War was based on The last time he had to catch a train difference

Studies. He would return to Oxford. first in War Studies, and then the Regius Professor of History. with Alastair Buchan, he founded the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In parallel was the astonishoriginal research and focused on was last Saturday 30th November it probably would have meant the The experience also left him with His first jobs were at King's College the social impact of the war in both with impeccable timing, the day after

He also contributed to official histories on strategy and the Mediterranean theatre in the Second World War. A commission to write the official history of Intelligence in the war led to a close encounter with the vetting authorities, when he revealed that he was gay - which he had done little to conceal from friends. Nonetheless, the men in suits got their oar in by forbidding publication on security grounds - it didn't appear till the end of the nineties.

Among the best, most original and accessible of his works, are the essays - which are the length of a Maupassant novella. Try his Clausewitz, A Very Short Introduction or his War and the Liberal Conscience. His Continental Commitment based on the Ford lectures raises Britain's dilemma as a European or global actor, a problem which haunts the Brexit debate. One of his last books, The Invention of Peace, based on lectures in his last post as professor at Yale, explains that peace only became a concept in modern diplomacy with Kant's influence in the Enlightenment.

His essay, The First World War, is a bravura tour d'horizon without a footnote, adjective or comma out of place. I give it, along with Orwell's Why I Write, to anyone aspiring to write history or current affairs journalism.

This is only part of the story. Michael was one of the most intriguing and subversively witty of companions and conversationalists. I only got to know him later in his life. He treated me like an errant research student - generally hailing me with "been anywhere really dangerous lately?"

We used to have extended lunches in which we swapped thoughts about recent books and articles. His whole approach was that history and journalism were complementary and must always be awake to new developments and nuances. He was devastating about the activities of George W Bush and the hubris of Tony Blair - and Department of War hated the whole notion of the "War on Terror". Going to war in Afghanistar and Iraq, he described as "like fighting cancer with a blow torch."

In the middle of it all was mischief and music. He had played oboe at One of the main school and loved classical opera. One endeavours was to help lunchtime we agreed not to talk milpoliticians and pub- itary, or history - but music. He then lic understand the dis- explained why he felt that the spiciplines of thinking ralling septet in the middle of The strategy, policy and Marriage of Figaro was for him one of diplomacy. To this end, the most thrilling moments of musical invention and entertainment.

> He looked on his pupils and friends for enlightenment. Last year he said "when you visit next, tell me your lat est thoughts on migration and what it means for us all. After all, you have been

He also had a tremendous touch lated Clausewitz's On War with his with bores. The standard approach After the war came a return to American colleague Peter Paret, when the bores were in incontinent

his 97th birthday. ■

The Summer Isles A Voyage of the Imagination

Travel writer Philip Marsden gives a thrilling account of our fascination with the islands that lie to the west of Britain and Ireland

he boat," wrote the philos- tower", Lou Reed's "great big clip-

out boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates." The whole sweep of Western culture, from its genesis in the oral cultures of the Aegean and Near East, to its modern manifestations - including rock music - is populated by boats, both real and imaginary, and

voyages. To Odysseus's long journeying to Ithaca, or Aeneas's flight from Troy, or Noah's Ark.

Rimbaud's bâteau ivre ("bathing in life wooden boat: "There's something Marsden decides to take his little T.S. Eliot fighting in the captain's tle curve of their topsides."

listening to his music

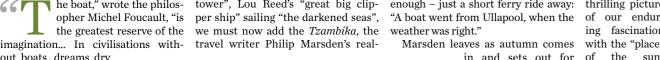
Bowie's Books by John O'Connell

Bowie brought to book

tastes to life proves that no amount of

This flawed attempt to bring Bowie's literary

analysis can really replace the sheer joy of



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"The boat," wrote the philosopher Michel Foucault, "is the greatest reserve of the imagination... In civilisations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates." The whole sweep of Western culture, from its genesis in the oral cultures of the Aegean and Near East, to its modern manifestations - including rock music – is populated by boats, both real and imaginary, and voyages.

the poem of the sea"). or Baudelaire's about wooden boats," he writes in wooden boat, *Tsambika*, on a voy- plane as "fairies and angels". vrais voyageurs ("drunk on space, light the first chapter of The Summer Isles age up the west coast of Ireland and and fiery skies"). Bob Dylan's vision - A Voyage of the Imagination. "The Scotland, his ultimate destination Isles have always exerted a power- remained there for a while, and then of the Titanic, with "Ezra Pound and noises they make, their smell, the sub- the Summer Isles. It is here that his ful pull on my own imagination. I saw swam away, Now I think about it, it had

in and sets out for of the sunwilder places, includ- set": the Celtic ing the Caucasus (he "Otherworld" was working as a jour- where islands nalist at the time), but disappear and promises to return in re-appear as if the spring. "This time, by magic and we might make it out which to the Summer Isles," ners imagined Bridget tells him over to be places of the phone. The next absolute bliss,

all," writes Marsden. account begins.

nary intellectual breadth and interest that they are dealing with a psycho- industry", before suggesting that his from an unusual, even oblique per- path. This gulf spective. Had this been done as well between image as it could have been, it would have and often sordid been the literary equivalent of Chris reality was a key O'Leary's magisterial, definitive song- one throughout by-song Bowie blog, Pushing Ahead of Bowie's work the Dame.

It has not been, but this is for two disidea behind John major cultural influences on his Ziggy tinctreasons, one of which is O'Connell's Life on Mars?

ing and convincing, as O'Connell marshals

to it explicitly, he is following in the "highly likely" that Bowie continued say, Jessica Mitford's 1963 exposé on footsteps of Thomas Wright's Oscar's to read Private Eye when he was exiled the US funeral industry The American Books, in which the author attempted to New York - or frustratingly super- Way of Death, and simply giving up to piece together an alternative biog- ficial. Nabokov's Lolita, for instance, by writing "life excited David Bowie, raphy of Wilde's life through his is rich in black humour, sexual trans- so it follows that he would have loved library, both catalogued and specula- gression and graced with an unreliable Jessica Mitford's blackly comic, fastive. The subject offers O'Connell the narrator whose charm and erudition tidiously researched exposé of corchance to approach Bowie's extraordi-seduce the reader, until they realise rupt practices in the American funeral

readers listen to Bowie's cover of Jacques Brel's La Mort. It all but screams "Will this do?"

theconservative online

The other problem with the book is nothing to do with O'Connell's efforts, but an inevitable flaw of attempting to treat song lyrics as literature. rather than an indivisible part of the creation. Without the music, and the indelible efforts of those who

Black Tie, White Noise sad tale of a lonely war veteran being were responsible for creating some of - the results are thrill- chased out of town when he forms a the twentieth century's most indelible songs, one is left with poetic musings Bowie's Books often gives a pot- of varying levels of profundity, often close reading of a book ted summary of a plot or argument, beautiful and brilliant themselves. But inspiration behind his 1974 album of Utopia and The Beano as being his with a new appraisal of Bowie's lyri- makes a tendentious comparison to as a great man once said, "writing about subject. One imagines O'Connell curs- amount of analysis can really replace

and secure property rights.

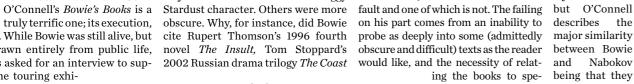
workers a full six years of growth."

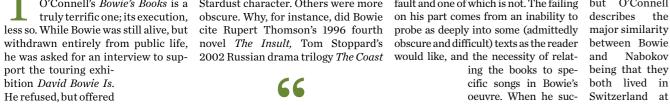
the wireless sector.

port the touring exhibition David Bowie Is. He refused but offered something that was in its own way more useful: a list of 100 books that he loved and that had inspired him. albeit without any further context or explanation. Some of the references were obvious; Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four was the

he

from his pique at being refused permission by Orwell's widow Sonia to music critic who interviewed Bowie chase alone adapt the novel into a musical, and in 2002, was drawn to this particular When he fails, the results are either ing with frustration at having to make the sheer joy of listening to the music A Clockwork Orange was one of the subject. Although he does not refer perfunctory - a friend believes it was an argument for why Bowie enjoyed, once again.





by **Alexander Larman**

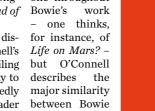
Without the music, and the indelible efforts of those who were responsible for creating some of the twentieth century's most indelible songs, one is left with poetic musings of varying levels of profundity, often beautiful and brilliant

themselves.

Diamond Dogs, which in turn arose favourite books? What did he mean? cal richness. Several of these essays are some aspect of Bowie's life or work, music is like dancing about architec-It is easy to see why O'Connell, a good enough to justify the book's pur- and then moves swiftly onto its next ture", and Bowie's Books proves that no

BOWIE'S BOOKSHELF one thinks, for instance. of

ing the books to spe- being that they cific songs in Bowie's both lived in oeuvre. When he suc- Switzerland at ceeds - as in the com- one point, and parison between James his suggestion Baldwin's 1963 essav for further liscollection The Fire Next tening is Bowie's Time and the title track 1967 song Little of Bowie's 1993 album Bombardier, a friendship with two children.



ago at his Aunt Bridget's house, set of "the West" in below the famous peaks of that area - Britain's mythi-Suilven, Stac Pollaidh, Ouinag and Ben cal imagination. More: "the oldest rocks in all Europe". and in tracing Looking out from their summits, he the stories of and Bridget became fascinated with the islands and the Summer Isles - far enough away sailing between by Alastair Benn to leave a wide expanse of sea between them, Marsden them and the mainland, but close leaves us with a enough - just a short ferry ride away: thrilling picture ing fascination Marsden leaves as autumn comes with the "places mari

day, Bridget goes out fertility and magical happenings; the never really forgotten the sight. Then, walking, this time to modern romance of the West Coast a couple of years ago, I was standing Ben More. She never as a place of retreat for the paint- on a beach to the south called Mellon returned, and was ers and poets of the 20th century (like Udrigle. It's a ring of white sand on the found at the bottom of Sylvia Plath, who spent some of her north side of a spit of land that arches a gully a few days later. last months on Inishbofin and recalled out into the Atlantic. It was a day typ-

"She'd fallen. That was "inhaling the sea air ecstatically"); and ical of the West – a sharp wind, dark the stories of the selkies in Scotland, cloud, giving way to flashes of bright Some years later, seals which could take on the form of sunlight, the great brown mounwomen, and which existed on the same tains shrouded, then lit up as if grazed with gold. I saw a seal (or was it a sel-I must admit, too, that the Summer kie?) pop its head above the water - it them from far off as a boy, and I have turned towards the Summer Isles.

THE

SUMMER

A Voyage of the Imagination

The Summer Isles are a small group

of islands just off the coast of the far

The Great Reversal: How America gave up on free markets by Thomas Philippo

How to save CAPITALISM from itself

US capitalism is out of control, the economist Thomas Philippon argues, it's time for a radical rethink

ree-market power, squash new entrants with the

crony corporatism is the arch enemy cellular service and, and polar opposite of free market cap- on average, get much italism. Thomas Philippon's The Great more?" He notes the *Reversal* describes in forensic detail transformation the efforts of the cronvists to limit eco- has personally experinomic freedom. Philippon, a profes- enced since coming to sor of finance at NYU's Stern Business live and work in the US School, also details the costs to us all of in 1999. "Access to the the rise of crony corporatism - his cal- internet, monthly cell culations suggest that the decline in phone plans and plane competition has deprived American tickets have become workers of \$1.5 trillion in income. much cheaper He points out "This is more than the Europe and Asia than entire cumulative growth of real com- in the US." pensation between 2012 and 2018. The

sented evidence, data, methodology,

capitalism focus on questions of culture and its is often contrasted with role in the current state of America. "crony capitalism" - the Philippon follows the money, seeking latter dominated by big the economic and financial roots of businesses that control the levers of America's current condition.

Philippon's findings make for some help of compliant regulator cronies uncomfortable reading but are much dation (primarily due to mergers quo) or intellecand claim to support economic liberty needed. The book presents broad- and acquisitions) and productivity tual (ideological)." He while relentlessly pursuing self-en- based evidence that competition has growth from 1989 to 1999 were good details how revolving richment. But "crony corporatism" declined in most US industries over for the overall economy. Industries doors and a particular sort has long seemed a better term for this, the past 20 years. Right in the Preface, with larger increases in concentra- of lobbying have been exploited as it bears so little resemblance to Philippon poses the question: "Why tion had larger productivity gains. and abused by powerful vested interactual capitalism - the sort based on on earth are US cell phone plans so Between 2000 and 2015, that turned ests to raise the bar against compeopen competition, level playing fields expensive? Or, to broaden it a little negative. The number of listed firms tition, protect prices, undermine further, why do consumers in Europe began shrinking - listings peaked in labour and smaller suppliers and gen- markets really are. "We take them for

Far from being a close relation, or in Asia pay less for he

Philippon makes the case that US 1997. Since then the number of listed ture has fostered over prescription. *Great Reversal* hard to put down. The but wages only increased by about in new listings. book's lessons and recommenda- 7% more than in Europe. The evi-America and J.D. Vance's Hillbilly more success tackling the economic Perhaps the most revealing part of trust remedies are not punishments

by Declan Ganley

better at thwarting the problem of over-concentration.

The book exposes how consoli-

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The crux of Philippon's argument is that for markets to remain free we must constantly adapt, that great powers become complacent and greed. The Roman and Chinese empires, Florence, the Spanish empire and the Dutch are all examples of such decline. America should not fall into the same trap.

lack of competition has cost American prices are too high, showing that firms has fallen by half. Some of this Monopoly power and monopsony since 2000 prices in the US increased is because of mergers between listed power (monopsony power is when a As an entrepreneur, I found The 15% more than prices in Europe, companies, some because of a decline firm can exert power on its suppliers high-competition economy will not be

tions are drawn from a broad range of dence is that increasing concentra- the financial sector to underline that well explained. Monopsony, which in their vested interests." He encourages industries, but it perfectly captured tion in the US has led to excessive while it has been good for itself, it has my own industry I have personally what I have encountered up close over price increases. Consumption and not reduced the price gap between experienced but never before had a the past 20 years in my own industry, growth would be markedly higher if savers and borrowers by much since name for (at least not a name I could competition had remained at the lev- the early stages of the 20th century. politely write down here) is shown to are the most costly, obvious and egre The Great Reversal isn't a political els that existed in 2000. Philippon Concentration in finance not only led have become even more pronounced gious abusers. book. It is a thorough yet readable pre- shows that in contrast - and per- to a "too big to fail" culture but has within the US. sentation of well-researched and pre- haps by accident rather than design also made the industry less efficient - Europe copied what were some of at getting capital to stimulate the bot- when conservatives argue that the US markets can and should regain their analysis and a conclusion based on the best elements of the older U.S. tom up growth that feeds the cycle needs fewer regulations but qualifies freedom. I humbly suggest that readthe past several decades of economic model and put a strong emphasis on from start up to small, to medium, to this position that the target should ing his book might be a good way to activity in both the U.S. and Europe. ensuring competition and prevent- large and so on. The evidence in the be "regulations that hinder the entry start. The Great Reversal is in a sense the ing over-concentration. He is not an book is that this churn rate has very or growth of small firms." He argues economic and political counterpart apologist for Europe's other prob-significantly declined and the finance there is need to be much tougher on of Timothy P. Carney's Alienated lems but does show that they've had sector has some share in that failure. incumbents. "Competition and anti-

Elegy While Carney and Vance threats to competition and have done The Great Reversal comes when the for moral wrongdoing, at least most of

Professor expose the depth and rot of regulatory cap-"Capture," ture. he explains, "can be direct (quid pro

erally rig the system to a point where it is becoming almost antimarket are the worst offenders.

Philippon also delves into the health care sector and shows regulatory capture and the opioid epidemic, where regulatory cap-

On regulations, he says that he agrees

THE GREAT REVERSAL

THOMAS PHILIPPON

Author homas hilippon is an economis and Professo of Finance at NYU's Stern usiness School

the time. They repre sent economic solu tions that make the broader economic system more efficient. Firms have a right to beat their competitors and even drive them out of business. Regulators have a

duty to make sure they do not impede free markets."

In his own conclusion he says he was surprised to find how fragile free granted, but history demonstrates that they are more the exception than the rule. Free markets are supposed free market. Some of to discipline private companies but those that employ the today, many private companies have language of the free grown so dominant that they can get away with bad service, high prices, and deficient privacy safeguards."

The crux of Philippon's argument is that for markets to remain free we must constantly adapt, that a strong link between great powers become complacent and greedy. The Roman and Chinese empires, Florence, the Spanish empire and the Dutch are all examples of such decline. America should not fall into the same trap.

He cautions: "Returning to a and employees because they have lim- easy. Those who benefit from the lack Philippon also turns his gaze toward ited options to go elsewhere) are also of competition will fight to protect more boldness and risk taking in challenging entrenched monopolies and oligopolies, most especially those that

There is a happy ending though Philippon makes it very clear that US

Declan Ganley is Chairman and CEO of Rivada Networks, a telecommunications company

The Russian conductor Maxim Emelyanychev's appointment to the Scottish Chamber Orchestra is a masterstroke

the conservative.online

Maxim Emelyanychev's unique style is turning heads

our-foot gobbets of orange student of Nizhny Novogorod Choral subway station, to St. George's Tron Rozhdestvensky, Church, at St. George's (now Nelson drones. A tempo. No kidding.

a duty legal aid lawyer, I defended the sant, Sergei Prokofiev and Wolfgang delivered. ingenious, engaging miscreants of the Amadeus Mozart in Glasgow's City city in Magistrate and Sheriff courts. Halls. I never could bring myself to think of would have been hailed as inventive He, on the cusp of geniuses, fronting IPOs, not picking global recognition, the up £50 fines with time to pay. Surely, SCO a highly skilled I'd seen every stunt a Glasgow punter's ensemble with a growingenuity has to offer? Was this bag- ing reputation. Robin pipe inferno a breach of the peace?

Nope. On this chilly, darkening, principal conductor, November evening, while citizens of now music director of the Dear Green Place scurried by, to Glyndebourne Festival one of the upscale watering holes that Opera, was able during litter reborn Glasgow's city centre, his four years in post, here was musical improvisation on a to build on the SCO's hitherto unprecedented scale.

A cheery highland air drifted across Maestro Emelyanythe street. The piper squeezed his bag. chev's appointment The drones transformed into blow should lift the ensemtorches, liberating pulsing flames, ble to a higher level. floating high and free for seconds before being spent, every time the SCO does not punch lilting tune demanded a blaw. World above its weight. It weary passers by simply gave the bag- already has plenty and put him out.

after all, just the most spectacular of Good test for the new kid. Buchanan Street's teeming populahome

fire belched into the College, Balakirev State Music Col-Glasgow twilight. Walk lege and Moscow State Conservasouth from Buchanan Street tory, where he studied under Gennady

In a far-sighted move, Maestro

The Maestro and the Chamber

Ticciati, the previous already high standing. Edinburgh based

stro add to the offering? Deep musical musicians.

The last movement is, effectively,

by Gerald Malone

conclusion in home key, C major. Mozart. finis. A test track, indeed.

Mandela) Place. There, you will Emelyanychev was appointed princi- the score with fresh colour, insights ful to untutored ears. encounter a Blazing Bagpiper, firing pal conductor of the Scottish Cham- on tempi that gave new meaning to

chev IS a baton - personified. Seem- starts with a phrase of only four notes, trouble to listen to the work again clients as criminals. In Palo Alto, most Orchestra are made for each other. ingly possessed by the music, every C, D, F and E, each a semibreve occu- twice, actually - afterwards, but could

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The Maestro and the Chamber Orchestra are made for each other. He, on the cusp of global recognition, the SCO a highly skilled ensemble with a growing reputation. Robin Ticciati, the previous principal conductor, now music director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera, was able during his four years in post, to build on the SCO's already high standing. Maestro Emelyanychev's appointment should lift the ensemble to a higher level.

truck would have sirened up the street much. So, what does the new Mae- hands carries a clear instruction to his conductor of the era; watch the doc- was spellbindingly beautiful, partly on

licence for yon flamethrower thingy, the programme, Mozart's 41st (Jupi- extending towards the thumb, coaxes piano concertos on Medici TV if you the range of their new principal con-McAzie - The Badpiper, doesn't do familiar. It has been one of my favou- a flattened right hand heralds a soft- as Maestro Emelyanychev to putting minutes put them to rest. elf and safety. Normally officious rite works since 1964 when I bought a ening, a turn of the head lifts a phrase the complexity of Mozart's part writenforcement goons let him be. He is, Klemperer recording and wore it out. from the woodwind above the orches- ing so compellingly on display. I hope conductor, at the threshold of a relationtral melee. Moto perpetuo.

tion of metal-painted mime artists a heroic summation of Mozart's life British conductor famous for Walt deliver great things for the Maestro tion of future heights to be conquered and demented grannies. Welcome - tentative beginning, developing Disney's 1940 Fantasia, first appears and the SCO. His talents are deserving as appreciation of those scaled on the themes, towering emotional highs, in shot, a white-tie silhouette on a of the showcase. Now let me introduce you to Scot- mournful string passage lows, minor high rostrum, colours swirling from The mixed repertoire on the night Concerto for Burning Badpiper, Orchesland's latest musical pyrotechnician, key diversions, rabbit warrens of reca- his hands and baton in sync with the was welcome. Audiences - that's me tra and Fire Extinguisher. Of course! Russian harpsichordist and con- pitulation, shuddering tutti catacl- music, as the opening chords of Bach's – need to be led from familiar pas- What, as they say in Buchanan Street, ductor, Maxim Emelyanychev, 31, a syms, then a celestially triumphant Toccata and Fugue sweep over the tures to new. SCO has a proud track could possibly go wrong?

audience. Many were no doubt mov- record of introducing and commisie-goers to whom Bach was unfa- sioning the works of contemporary miliar. Maestro Stokowski and Walt composers - Sir James MacMillan. Disney (just think, this was only his Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sally Beamthird movie) were hell bent on a mis- ish Karin Behnovist, Einojuhani Bau-Maestro Emelyanychevilluminated sion to make classical music meaning- tavaara, Hafliði Hallgrímsson and

Neither of Maestro Emelvanychey's

what I'm about to do

Lotta Wennäkoski.

Philippe Hersant's Five Pieces for occasional flames from three red hot ber Orchestra in September. On his familiar passages, urging his ensem- audiences - in front or behind - could Orchestra, commissioned in 1997 debut in the post, he was intent on set- ble to super-human effort. Crystal be in any doubt about what this piece for the Symphonic Orchestra of I belong to Glasgow. For ten years, as ting fire to the scores of Philippe Her- clear articulation of each motif was of Mozart meant to him. The finale Nancy, was an interesting introducof the Jupiter, Molto Allegro, proved tory choice. It is an academic exer-He does not use a baton. He does his ideal showcase. Believe it or not, cise in making use of motif, colour and not heed a baton. Maestro Emelyany- Mozart's autobiographical apotheosis rhythm, in compact form. I took the pying all four beats of not engage. I get the developmental the 4/4 time-signature point, but it was emotionless. Doubtless, my fault.

Nothing could be Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.2 in simpler. What can G minor was a better-known favouranyone make of that? ite. Soloist. Carolin Widmann, profes-Of course. Mozart is sor of music at Leipzig's University of about to hang on those Music and Theatre, travels widely and simplest of notes com- her commitment to this dramatic conplex musical tapestry certo matched that of the conductor of the most outstand- at the rostrum. The performance was ing beauty. He has the quite a spectacle. SCO would be wise balls to show his bare to build on the relationship as Fräu frame to the audience lein Widmann went down a bomb before he does. "Look with the Glasgow audience

The encore politically incorrect with this!" Show-off. clapping hands demanded was - seem-In recent times, I ingly grudgingly - delivered. The conthink only Austrian ductor - impromptu, and doubtless conductor, Nikolas feeling threatened - sat down at his Harnoncourt - for my safe-space piano and accompanied a piper a wide berth. In New York, a fire of weight of its own, thank you very movement of his body, head, arms and money the most insightful Mozart Ravel violin sonata with the violinist. It umentary on his collaboration with account of its spontaneity. If anyone in 'Scuse me, pal. Has youse got a insight and gutsy brio. That's what. Of A raised left hand, the index finger Lang Lang performing Mozart's the hall had any lingering doubts about by the way?" The self-styled Cam ter) C Major Symphony was the most a sharpening of tone from the strings, don't believe me - has come as close ductor's abilities, that enchanted five

> The joy of attending this debut of a the relationship forged with Glasgow ship with an orchestra that promises so Leopold Stokowski, the Polish/ based recording label, Linn, will much for both, was as much in anticipanight. And that future? Cam McAzie's

as Brick and Looper to bring the world The Last Jedi. It divided opinion upon release, and with its defenders praising it as a socially conscious, woke and irreverent take on the Star Wars universe, and others panning it for the same reasons.

For what it's worth I hated The Last Jedi Knives Out.

quickly."

So what are we to make of that a supposed war hero-turned-terror- was that it was an adaptation of very modern writing dilemma? To ist, could well have benefitted from Hagai Levi's Israeli drama, BeTipul, nailed it. The show's title reflects its much-loved show to its final stop after end something slowly and well, ah one series which the multi-series drama. go on for five or six series very often 2, was not based or have one thing in common - they start a book. It showed.

that's the thing. Not via a playwright ended with a bang. Sarah Treem cut leave after Series 4, and another star easy, comedy is hard" is overused, it 66 her teeth writ- Joshua Jackson also left, the final epi- doesn't apply to drama. Ricky Gervais (although plays can often be long Big Little Lies. ing for television. sode - which aired a couple of weeks and John Cleese had the sense to say enough) but for the show-runner of based on Lianne In its own way, quite Moriarty's book, Treem seems to ago on Showtime in the US and Sky goodbye after two series each of The Shakespearean. These episodic dramas which, often was another. Big have learnt from Atlantic - was a triumph. through the demands of US television, Little Lies, season this on The Affair, Treem knitted together closure for Everyone dies. which she and Levi the principal characters, where the probably Six Feet Under, Alan Ball's co-created. *The* viewer demanded it, the appropriate with rapturously received reviews The howls of anguish around could Affair won Golden Globes for Best levels of messiness for the whodunit The final minutes unfolded over many and end in reviled finales. Worse, if be heard over Journey's Don't Stop Drama and its female stars Maura which was never solved and a moving years, as it killed off its characters one you're House of Cards, and the star and Believin' on Tony Soprano's diner Tierney and Ruth Wilson. executive producer is Kevin Spacey. jukebox when his family took their last After five series, Treem was left with Whole of the Moon. The song began of Sia's Breathe Me. Sometimes the ending is inevitable. bow on HBO. Many seemed convinced the task of wrapping things up and it and ended the final episode itself. When Bartlet's Presidency was over, that Game Over on Game of Thrones is not a spoiler alert to say she utterly It is a hard trick to pull off, to guide a Everyone dies.

Knives Out Big laughs and fiendishly sophisticated revelations

Writer-director Rian Johnson's latest film is a terrifically enjoyable whodunit full of sly digs at Trump's America

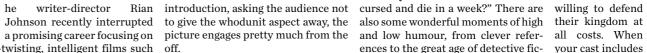
by **Alexander Larman**

genre-twisting, intelligent films such off.

subsequently.

beyond comprehension for its arro-

Although the heart initially sinks



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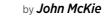
The biggest surprise is how funny the whole affair is. Many of the wittiest lines are thrown away virtually as asides. When one minor character is shown a crucial but poor quality security videotape, he asks earnestly "Does this mean that I'll be cursed and die in a week?"

In one of those loathsome, privi- audience. This is especially so after it It helps that Johnson has assemgance and smugness, and it has joined leged families that American cinema seems, playing against expectations, bled a crack team of actors. Craig, vis- cousin Nathan contributes a suitably a small circle of hell in which simi- does so well, the multi-millionaire that the whodunit aspect has been ibly relieved to be freed of his Bond dramatic, witty score. lar follies like I Heart Huckabees and patriarch and successful crime nov- wrapped up far earlier than the aver- shackles, is a hoot as the drawling pri-Ocean's Twelve reside. But Johnson elist Harlan Thrombey (Christopher age viewer might expect. has now returned to the smaller films Plummer) is found dead the morning It's also surprisingly political, and in a deliberately absurd southern pictures around Christmas, a time that made his name, albeit with a after his 85th birthday party. It looks clever with it. Although Johnson accent. His other iconic co-star Evans when the market is usually saturated starry cast, in his postmodern take like suicide, but eccentric private wore his left-wing sympathies on his is also relishing the chance to play a with mega-blockbusters, including on Agatha Christie murder mysteries, investigator Benoit Blanc (Daniel sleeve with The Last Jedi, Knives Out jerk, complete with a variety of excel- this year's great curiosity, Cats. Still. Craig) suspects foul play, and says so does a far more elegant and involv- lent knitwear, who could not be fur- Knives Out is terrifically enjoyable Does it pass muster? Thankfully, at every opportunity, much to the dis- ing job of offering the Thrombey ther removed from Captain America clever and enormous fun, a genuinely it does, with some flair and aplomb. comfort of those around him.



Television series rarely end in a satisfying away - playwright Sarah Treem's The Affair pulls off the impossible

ll's well that ends well, wrote so was *The West Wing*.



'tis done, then 'twere well it were done *Homeland* is a good example of a thing of a whimper series which, with Damian Lewis as What's relevant to In Treatment



Marta Cabrera (Ana de Armas)? His to grandson Hugh "Ransom" Drysdale designer David (Chris Evans)? Or the sinister Walt Crank for his (Michael Shannon), Thrombey's son- superb work. in-law? One thing is for certain. In any film called "Knives Out", and there in it are lecheris a vast display of elaborate-looking ous, greedy and knives, they are going to be used at instinctively hossome point.

The biggest surprise here is how - there is a good funny the whole affair is. Many of the gag about how wittiest lines are thrown away virtu- none of the family ally as asides. When one minor char- ever get Marta's acter is shown a crucial but poor country of oriquality security videotape, he asks gin right - but earnestly "Does this mean that I'll be are nonetheless cursed and die in a week?" There are willing to defend ences to the great age of detective fic- your cast includes

tion to a running joke the likes of Don about falsehood-in- Johnson duced vomiting, which Jamie Lee Curtis, pays off in spectacular both excellent at fashion at the end.

Humour does rather pan comedy this overwhelm suspense, requires, it makes and this is not a film the jokes land all that will have viewers the harder, along on the edge of their with the points seats, but the final rev- it's making. No elations are clever, doubt this will do play fair with the household, and beyond.

when Johnson appears in a filmed Thrombey's apparently devoted nurse America. Particular credit must go in a role equal parts twinkly and stern, elations.

left what they saw as the wrong person nearest the Throne. Don Draper may have found his Californian place of Zen in the last embers of the slow-burning Mad Men. Critics and those happy-go-lucky types on Social Media didn't. Terence Winter's Boardwalk Empire and Aaron Sorkin's The Newsroom both seemed rushed to a conclusion when HBO decided to make their final series much shorter.

This also happened to the initially well-received psychiatric drama, In Treatment, which saw Gabriel Byrne take home a Golden Globe. The Irish actor Byrne played a shrink, which is what HBO did to season three (28 Shakespeare. The same man The one-off six-part dramas like half-hour episodes shown over four (unless you believe in the con- State of Play or Edge of Darkness are days) after seasons one (43 episodes) spiracy theory of The Bard by commit-less popular in America than the and two (35). It ended, with Byrne's tee) also wrote "If it were done when more lucrative multi-series option. character in inner turmoil, with some

production

The characters tile to immigrants and the kind of dead-

well-thought-out and be required watching in the Sanders



and it's a delight to see Frank Oz in human rather than puppet form as a put-upon lawyer. Finally, Johnson's

Film companies often take a risk vate detective, speaking his aphorisms releasing original, adult-oriented house, in all its Gothic, gloomy mag- if he tried. The rest of the ensemble intriguing mystery with as many big But who is responsible? Is it nificence, as an analogy for Trump's are all excellent, especially Plummer laughs as fiendishly sophisticated rev-

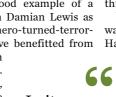


where playwright narrative and, after Wilson asked to many series. If the aphorism "Dying is

Office and Fawlty Towers

The best series finale of all time was drama about a family of funeral years. arc around The Waterboys' anthem by one in the future, to the soundtrack

In its own way, quite Shakespearean.



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

n San Francisco, on Thanks- taking drugs and enforced a gruelling last time. They were an effortlessly first "electric" US tour in 1965. There would hone their sound on hero louche cast of musicians with implau-followed two delirious years of sordid in-soaked tours. George Harrison, sibly good names; Rick Danko, the glamour and excess as they accompa- Eric Clapton and Roger Waters spoke clean-cut, heart-throb bassist: Garth nied Dylan around the world. Hudson, the scholarly, dishevelled organist; Robbie Robertson, the Woodstock, New York, taking up Robertson, the group's chief songslight, dapper guitar prodigy; Richard residence in a pink house in a 100- writer, had had enough after 16 years Manuel, the gentle, troubled pianist; acre plot where Dylan and The Band on the road and wanted The Band to and Levon Helm the brooding drum- would record *The Basement Tapes*, call it a day mer with an Arkansas drawl. All were It was here that they produced their dressed in finest gigolo chic and play- ground-breaking debut album, Music When Robertson and promoter Bill ing like their lives depended on it.

They played for five hours and were collaborated. joined on stage by a who's who of rock royalty. Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, Neil were counter-revolutionary. The roll devotee. He had helped to edit Young, Eric Clapton, Muddie Waters record's black-and-white inner panel Woodstock, the 1970 documentary and Dr. John were among those who shows them as rugged, 19th century chronicling the phenomenon. This paid tribute to the quintet and came outlaws. They rejected the conten- new project was a chance to capture rock history that was coming to an its mistrust of anyone over 30. The est concert films of all time.

ing a living by supporting rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins. But they grew understated. tired of playing the same old songs

giving Day 1976, the origi- rehearsal schedule. Well-respected and nal members of The Band supremely talented, they caught the eye performed together for the of Bob Dylan who recruited them for his success. Over the next few years they

> In 1968, The Band moved to having on them. But by the mid-70s. from Big Pink, on which Dylan also Graham pitched the idea to a 35-year-

The Band's music, image and ethos have a choice. Scorsese was a rock & together to celebrate a golden age in tious idealism of hippie culture and the sun setting on rock's adolescence. had started out as The Hawks, scrap- try, soul, rockabilly and gospel. The intimacy of close friends. sound was authentic, imaginative and

Their follow up album, The Band,



of the influence The Band's music was

The Last Waltz was his brainchild. old Scorsese, the director felt he didn't

Scorsese gets the rhythm of the end. Martin Scorsese filmed it all. The album's sound stood in stark contrast film spot on. The numbers are interresult, which has somehow slipped to the psychedelia fashionable at the spersed with quirky vignettes of the The American and four Canadians was a warped hybrid of blues, coun- with a laid-back charm and the easy

Visually, the film is glitzy and ele- it all. gant. Scorsese borrowed the set from San Francisco Opera's production of music docs. Scorsese chose to film The sonally witnessed the Union forces All My Love. Last Waltz in full 35mm splendour.

alchemy between the five musicians Robertson of Helm's performance.

and their illustrious guests. The bandmates feed off each another and operate as one slick unit, exchanging looks of quiet satisfaction or naked adulation.

It's an incredibly tight gig. Eric Clapton, who had wanted to join The Band, trades bluesy solos with Bobertson in Further On Up The Road, Muddie Waters quivers and jiggles in feisty performance of Mannish Boy. Rick Danko breaks hearts with the reflective, mournful, It Makes No Difference. Joni Mitchell's tender. witty rendition of Coyote is a treat.

ing in his early touring days.

the concert performance. When Neil their heyday. Richard Manuel took Young's harmonica sweeps in at the the fall especially hard. In the film's start of Helpless, a sense of nostalgic interludes, Manuel is cheerful, gentle melancholy and things coming to an and laconic. The deep affection his old through the cracks of popular mem- time and instead invoked old-time, bandmates telling stories, jamming, end fills the room. The song ends with friends have for him is clear. But he's ory, is The Last Waltz, one of the great- rural America, traditional values and and hanging out. The men open up Danko, Robertson and Young belting so drunk that he misses his cue for the a sense of small-town community. It about their worldview and backstory out the refrain into a single micro- verse in I Shall Be Released and is shot phone. Joni Mitchell sings offstage a questioning look by Robertson.

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The Band's music, image and ethos were counter-revolutionary. The record's black-and-white inner panel shows them

as rugged, 19th century outlaws. They

rejected the contentious idealism of hippie culture and its mistrust of anyone over 30. The album's sound stood in stark contrast to the psychedelia fashionable at the time and instead invoked old-time. rural America, traditional values and a sense of small-town community. It was

a warped hybrid of blues, country, soul, rockabilly and gospel. The sound was authentic, imaginative and understated.

Another highlight is Stage Fright, Waltz hasn't lost its impact. But it's ebratory concert film. Scorsese capblistering, punchy number about sad to watch the film knowing how tures an intriguing moment is rock Robertson's crippling fear of perform- The Band's story would end. They history. He pays homage to a musiresumed touring, minus Robertson, cal era that had reached its high-wa-The Staple Singers accompany in 1983. But the circuit of small bars ter mark, But he also manages to tell The Band in a soulful, gospel version and seedy lounges they were playing a poignant story about old friends takof *The Weight*, recorded later on an in was a brutal comedown from the ing a final bow together and saying MGM soundstage and substituted for dizzying heights they had reached in goodbye.

Helm put it, the "long, loving close-ups of his heavily made-up face and expensive haircut"

And he's got a point. It's not hard to tell that Robertson also produced the film and stayed up with Scorsese for months on end for coke-fuelled editing sessions. Bobertson and the band's manager. Albert Grossman. also enjoyed the lion's share of the royalties. "It was a real scandal" wrote Helm in his memoirs.

But for all the bitterness and tragedy that followed, The Las

Even after 43 years, The Last Waltz is a glorious, uplifting and cel-



more peaceful or relaxing holiday. around these walls.

If you pick the right day, then you will have a clear vantage point of the picturesque alleys, churches, and rooftops. The sandstone buildings and spectacular towers built across several generations of Dubrovnik's past This piece, dating to c. 1657/8, shows and provocative, placing the dimenteries and museums. If you are serious brooding tableau. about trekking round several museums to absorb information and cul-Museum of Modern Art.

A winter weekend in DIBROVNIK is the perfect escape

The sights and sounds of Dubrovnik set a wonderful scene for travellers hoping to escape the madding crowd for a charming winter weeken



wearing for those who are looking for a by John the Baptist.

I would instead recommend making recommend starting any winter tour of Dubrovnik with a walk around the historic town walls which encircle the Old Town. Fans of HBO's television series Game of Thrones will, of course, love it - many of the show's iconic moments were filmed in and

spot where swarms of tourists flock to disappoint – it houses truly stunning esoteric riches from Croatia's history.

tion for a short, but memorable get- Caravaggio. It ties Dubrovnik's rich which add to the experience. away for anyone looking to combine history to the cultural currents of

ubrovnik is usually asso- only are its cloisters very beautiful. Dubrovnik's place in the lucrative trade ciated with the sights and they are also a wonderfully wistful routes between Venice and the East in sounds of summer. It is place at this time of year. The museum this period. In short, the Dominican known as an Adriatic hot attached to the monastery does not museum is a hidden treat filled with jazz and blues and has a delicious

see historic walls and streets that make canvasses and devotional artworks. If you're seeking something with a with delicate cuisine. Another good up the Old Town. In these months, the One impressive piece was a polyptych little more modern spark, however, sign is that, even in the winter, it is fregorgeous Mediterranean heat and the created by the itinerant Montenegrin then there is also an unexpected sur- quented by the locals. The service was promise of stunning scenes causes the painter, Lovro Marinov Dobričević prise under ten minutes' walk away on swift and courteous. place to quite literally erupt with peo- in 1448 in which resplendent golden the other side of the Old Town. This is ple. This certainly makes for an atmo- arches and vivid colours surround a an exhibition devoted to the Spanish spheric experience, but it can become scene depicting the baptism of Christ surrealist maverick, Salvador Dali, Fontana, a cheap and charming estabcurrently being shown in the Convent lishment tucked away in one of the There is also a more subdued, but of St. Claire. It is a well presented town's small side streets. It is one of nonetheless grand, canvass by the space, with light classical music in the few bars in the area that locals a trip to Dubrovnik in the winter, as I Neapolitan painter, Antonio de Bellis, the background and quotes from Dali still frequent. It is an authentic taste did in November. It is a perfect loca- who was powerfully influenced by himself bedecking the walls, both of of Croatian café culture in the day and

The works which are on display evening culture with good cuisine. I would emerging baroque styles of painting, here are also typically fascinating

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If you pick the right day, then you will have a clear vantage point of the picturesque alleys, churches, and rooftops. The sandstone buildings and spectacular towers built across several generations of Dubrovnik's past give a charming illusion of time travel.

give a charming illusion of time travel, the Virgin with St. Blaise and St. sions of Dali's eccentric and brilliant. While wandering around the Old Francis before the port of Dubrovnik mind before your eves. One display Town, I would also advise taking a trip in the decade preceding the disastrous showed works by Dali on the horse in could go for the Villa Orsula, which is to one of the many spectacular monas- earthquake of 1667 in a sublime and human culture, from a Lady Godiva only a five minute walk from the Old

Museum also has a collection of rare and Sancho Panza to the terror of the edge of the Old Town, and boasts its ture, it is possible to invest in a single but important manuscripts which Trojan horse from Homer's Odyssey. ticket that will give you access to sev- can be viewed up close in the displays. eral of the Town's museums, from the One fascinating item was a translation complete the walk around the town's Luxury Hotels (SLH) Group, and institutions devoted to Dubrovnik's of Aristotle's Metaphysics into Latin treasures is to be found just outside guarantees to provide a personalised archaeology and natural history to the from the 13th century, presumably from of the gates of the Old Town. I would and luxurious experience. Arabic, a document testifying to the recommend dining at Gusta Me, a All in all, the sights and sounds of One place which particularly rediscovery of this work by scholars café and restaurant just outside the Dubrovnik set a wonderful scene for impressed me was the Dominican in Europe during the centuries after south-eastern entrance. It is a trendy travellers hoping to escape the mad-Monastery and Museum, towards the what has been called "the twelfth cen- example of Croatia's famous café cul- ding crowd for a charming winter Old Town's south-eastern gate. Not tury Renaissance". It is a testament to ture, which plays smooth American weekend.

A welcome prize for those who It is a member of the prestigious Small

by Jack Dickens

lunch menu. It combines great coffee

Dubrovnik's bars are an essen tial experience. I would recommend a taste of its vibrant night life in the

I staved at the Rixos Libertas Hotel which is a short and sharp fifteen minute walk away from the Old Town. It can be reached easily by taxi also, with fares costing between 60-80 Kuna (about £7-£10). The hotel has a good range of rooms from £100 upwards, and commands a view of the Adriatic coastline which weaves and winds around Dubrovnik and its environs. It has a comfortable bar with good food and a restaurant which provides both a set menu and buffets for breakfast. lunch, and dinner. It is modern, spacious and deluxe.

Those seeking a smaller, and perhaps more authentic, atmosphere rendered with radiant colours and a Town. It is set in a boutique 1930s villa For the true geek, the Dominican watercolour depiction of Don Quixote overlooking Lokrum Island and the own Peruvian fine dining restaurant.

THINGS TO DO



THE HISTORIC TOWN WALLS OF THE OLD TOWN Take a walk around the fortifications which encircle the Old Town, with stunning views of Dubrovnik's historic architecture and the



THE DOMINICAN MONASTERY AND MUSEUM The quiet cloisters of the monastery are matched by an exciting museum which boasts esoteri treasures for art and history geeks







D'VINO WINE BAR The friendly staff and cosy atmosphere contribute to the perfect location in which to try out Croatia's wines, and a few tasty

liaht bites too.







RIXOS LIBERTAS HOTEL



sea. An ideal retreat away from the centre of town /ILLA ORSUL A small boutique hotel

lose to the Old Town. It promises to provide in intimate and uxurious experience, complete with its own eruvian restaurant.





THE SALVADOR









hat makes a meal memorable? I still recall the revelation I had 30 years in charge of his own kitchen. It was salata made of cured cods roe and of Vin Jaune from the Jura with a perhaps more pronounced, as I had with Japanese Bottarga and a herb sauce comprising the pigeon's unused returned that day from Paris, where I called Mitsuba or wild chervil, a cross portions. had eaten at several two-star Michelin between parsley and celery leaves. It his meal surpassed them all.

Kong, a self-described "Neo-Parisian exotic flavour. Bistro", was more than memorable it was a revelation. This was spectacin a kitchen smaller than my home "Nicoise" or cured Japanese mackerel - a veal sweetbread "en brioche" with kitchen. And, there are only five chefs. with a Mediterranean mixture of vege- béarnaise sauce. Again, a highly tech-It was not happenstance that took me tables and herbs was the only dish that nical dish with the sweetbread sauto Daniel Calvert's Belon. I had heard didn't grab my full attention.

about him from other writers and chefs for the past vear. But nonetheless, it was staggering to be served dishes of the highest level of satisfaction and technique in such a modest location - a side street in SoHo, opposite a non-descript Thai Restaurant and a place called "Pop Vegan".

Daniel has an impeccable record of a weed "feuilletage" was the dish of cream between them. decade spent in the leading restaurants the day – layers of puff pastry with I hope I have managed to convey (Per Se) and Paris (L'Epicure) but this mouth. is the first place under his command.

ded bench surrounding the dining area a confit of chicken and Champignons Michelin star and a place both on the and simple wooden tables and chairs. de Paris. I was curious how such a per- Worlds 50 Best and the Asian 50 Best My eye was drawn to a wall of empty fect combination was achieved and but this is cooking of at least twobottles of the finest wines - Pétrus, learned that the central chicken por- star calibre. Yannick Alléno, the most Montrachet, Domaine Romanée- tion was confited, rolled into a sausage feted French chef, with two three-Conti, Domaine Raveneau - until I and then frozen while the foie gras sur- star Michelin restaurants, concurred remembered that because Hong Kong rounding it was poached in a towel and commenting under a picture of a dish has zero import duty on wine, these hung for a week. were all local collector's BYOs.

The meal began fairly conventionally- four starters - aged Comté cheese gougères, a generous loaf of bread with salted Brittany butter, a hand-made Saucisson de Bigorre and finally, a bombshell - a tiny

by **Bruce Palling**

The oyster tartare with Ossetia caviar cream.

66

This was spectacular cooking of the very highest level in a kitchen smaller than my home kitchen. And, there are only five chefs.

belonsoho.com

Set Meals: from £125 a head plus wine A la Carte – approx. £300 a head

and Sorrel, was a playful version of Chinese drunken chicken i.e. poached in an alcoholic beverage. Given ago after my first meal at Harveys, tartlet with herbs on the top which Daniel's francophilia, it was inevitawhere Marco-Pierre White was first was a Japanese version of tarama- bly Anjou Pigeon prepared in a stock

The next delight was a Hokkaido restaurants. Suddenly, I realised that is always a sign of good things to come scallop in two versions - one with a when something non-descript blows sauce comprising four different types My Sunday lunch at Belon in Hong your socks off with its intensity and of seaweed and the other liberally plastered with fresh Alba truffles and

was almost equal to a similar dish at Le The hours were ticking by but the ular cooking of the very highest level Cinq in Paris and the following Sanma last main course was worth waiting for téed but still almost raw before being

cooked in a spinach leaf and then surrounded by a shrimp farce and brioche. As a special treat we were given another slice of this. smothered in white truffles I was almost too sated to manage dessert, but was glad to nonetheless a "Mont Blanc" or puréed

The subsequent fresh Ikura chestnuts with whipped cream, here Still in his early thirties, the boyish (salmon eggs) wedged between a sea- rendered as nine miniature buns with

of London (Pied a Terre), New York the popping eggs evaporating in your how extraordinarily accomplished this meal was - far far beyond what This was followed by a circular slice could be termed a "Neo-Parisian The decor is nondescript, with a pad- of "Foie Gras au Torchon" surrounding Bistro". Daniel already has one I posted on Instagram... "The best in The next dish "Drunken Pigeon" Hong Kong". This is not to side-line with Celtuce (Chinese lettuce) other renowned Hong Kong Chefs. It is just that it is rare to come across a chef as young as Daniel, already creating dishes that nudge perfection, surely indicating the best is yet to come



the conservative.online



n recent years, the power of its name in commercial terms has only been rivalled by its Northern Italian stable mate Pinot Grigio. A wine that has brought affordable and approachable fizz to the masses across Europe is loved by tens of millions.

Due to its relatively sweeter palate, and cheaper method of production that means it is not only for special occasions. Prosecco has become so popular that it challenged the growth of Champagne.

Prosecco's "glass of giggles" reputation has been so strong that few dared to predict the waning of its popularity.

To put its dominance in some context, nearly a quarter of the total Prosecco production is consumed in the UK, which means that in 2017 there were nearly one hundred and twelve million bottles drunk. In Britain for every one bottle of Champagne there are four bottles of Prosecco sold, a truly colossal amount by any reckoning.

But its dominance is slipping. From its once seemingly untouchable position of superiority, Prosecco sold 7% fewer bottles in the UK last year than it did in the previous year and much to the chagrin of the French, it was not because of the resurgence of Champagne.

At an industry briefing I attended, the person presenting changes in the market place said that Prosecco's popularity had declined due to the enormous rise in the popularity of gin. In fact, as a whole, the UK wine industry saw a decline of 7% last year largely driven by, in my opinion, the "Emperor's new clothes" of spirits.

It is not a surprise that the public palate has begun the move on to another product; it was always likely to do so at some point. My sadness is only that drinkers have not, at the moment, moved to another wine category. As a wine enthusiast, my advice is that there are plenty of affordable European alternatives to Prosecco out there.

While the much maligned Cava from Spain has definitely pulled up its socks and there are now some respected people producing some beautiful wines, I suggest you should be focussing on the amazing French fizzes called Crémant.

Most wine producing parts of France will have a crémant, in fact Champagne is really just the crémant from that specific region. All are made by the same method as their uber-famous cousin, but retail at a fraction of its price.

If you're curious, the ones I'd advise you to try are the Crémant de Loire and Crémant d'Alsace which are often based on Chardonnay and the famous grapes of their respective regions, Chenin Blanc and Pinot Blanc respectively. Their beauty is that they are really delicious wines. They make "every day drinking fizz" interesting again.

Crémant de Bourgogne Brut Blanc, Simonnet-Febvre - produced by traditional methods since 1840. Using Chardonnay, it is the only Maison in Chablis to produce Crémants of Burgundy

Crémant d'Alsace Brut, Gustav Lorentz - from an Alsatian dynasty that stretches back to 1748, this is a classic blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir & Pinot Blanc

Bouvet Ladubay Saumur NV - a super Crémant de Loire using the classically delicious Chenin Blanc from this area.





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Musée d'Orsay, France

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CULTURE IGEST

The best of Europe's art and culture



Classical Highlights

of Holland's most prom ists, Nicolas van Poucke 1 the Recital Hall of



Degas at the Opéra Until 19th January 2020

Degas once called the opera his "own room" and spent his career exploring its various spaces (auditorium, stage, boxes, foyers dance studios) as well as those who frequented them (dancers, singers, orchestral musicians, audience members). This is the first exhibition to exclusively consider this fascination and brings together many of the great artist's masterpieces.



La Bohème 19th, 22nd and 25th December State Opera Vienna, Austria

It's funny to think Puccini's opera of struggling young artists received criticism at its premiere in 1896, now it is one of the most performed operas in the world. This impressive looking production is conducted by Marco Armiliato.



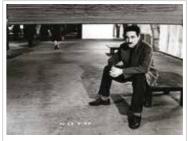
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Dalí & Magritte

ntil 9th February 2020, oyal Museum of Fine Arts

f our greatest surrealists. Da nd Magritte first met in Paris 1 1929 and struck a bond befo



Soto. The Fourth Dimension

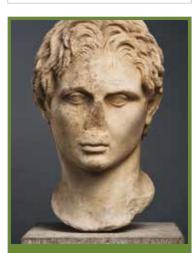
Until 9th February 2020. ienheim Bilbao. Spaii

This retrospective focuses on the influential work of Venezuelan kinetic artist Jesús Rafael Soto. Soto transformed the art of the second half of the 20th century: re-defining its social scope and function at the same time as breaking the dichotomy between painting and sculpture. Soto created art objects that were truly innovative in their conception.



Bacon: **Books and Paintings** Until 20th January 2020 Centre Pompidou, France

Catch the last few weeks of this major exhibition focusing on the last two decades of Bacon's career. Six rooms filled with paintings and self-portraits, the Pompidou shows how literary figures from Eliot to Aeschylus influenced the painter's work.



fough Types. Portraits of Ancient Greeks ntil 27th September 202 Ites Museum, Germany

eek sculpture formed foundation of Western raiture. However, the ks never sought to captı e true appearance of an lividual but depicted their ings and philosoph ng to cultural types tion of this ancient prac

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24. Musician's asset

25. Rivers in Mexico

26. Prepared to fire

27. Kind of owl

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instruments

31 Kind of breath

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41. Wire service

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33. Cairo's country

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40. Sportscaster Johr

44. I.M. ____ (architect)

45.100 nanoioules

49. Chipped away at

56. Evaluate 58. Knocks on a door

60. Bossy dinosaur in

65. Author Bradbury

63. Chatte

64. Stumble

"The Land Before Time"

54. Donations for the poor

55. Extend one's service life

59. Words after laugh or live

61. Not _____ eye in the house

50. Perce tribe

23. KY neighbor



Drawn From Life. Vorks on Paper 1850-1950

ion at the Krö um is famous foi



Pietro Aretino and the Art of the Renaissance Until 1st March 2020, Uffizi, Ital

Pietro Aretino was an influential voice of the Renaissance having trained to paint before turning to writing; after his death in 1556 most of his work was banned by the Vatican. The Uffizi's new exhibition looks at Aretino's influence during the first half of the sixteenth century: a vital period in the development of the Italian Renaissance.

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ACROSS

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- 52. Left, as a job 54. Rice. to Ricardo 57. Song that begins "My country, 'tis of thee 62. Pb, in chemistry 63. Sprouted 66. Speechless 67. Skinny as 68 Cat rumble 69. Burned rubber 70. Utah canyon with hoodoos 71 Neuter DOWN
- I. Party pooper 2. Part of MYOB 3. "The Censor" of ancient Rome 4. Ray who created the McDonald's empire 5. Squirrel's snack 6. Minded junior Datebook abbr 3. Without exception . "See ya!" 10. California city near Berkelev
- 1. Prime seating spot 12. IRS workers
- 13. Corned beef concoction 18. Grass roots locale

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