

THE CONSERVATIVE

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL BY THE ALLIANCE OF CONSERVATIVES AND REFORMISTS IN EUROPE

POPULISM

HOW SHOULD CONSERVATIVES RESPOND?

Roger Scruton | Anne-Elisabeth Moutet | Daniele Capezzone | John O'Sullivan | Alvino-Mario Fantini | David Goodhart



THE CONSERVATIVE

The Conservative is a quarterly Journal in print and online, sponsored by the Alliance of the Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (ACRE).

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EDITORIAL: POPULISM: HOW SHOULD CONSERVATIVES RESPOND?

If “nationalist” is the harshest word in Brussels, “populist” runs it a close second. A Eurocrat will spit out the epithet like a teenager who has mistakenly taken a swig from a beer can that was being used as an ashtray.

The word is rarely defined, but that doesn't stop it being bandied about a great deal. Calling a referendum is populist. Upholding the result of a referendum is populist. Defending your national interest is populist. Demanding tax cuts is populist. Exposing malfeasance within the governing class is populist. Sovereignty is populist. The one thing it seems unequivocally to mean is, “something that other people like, but I don't”.

The populist label can thus be slapped on politicians with widely divergent opinions who happen to challenge the status quo. It was applied simultaneously to Bernie Sanders and to Donald Trump, to Syriza and to the AfD. Yet, as John O'Sullivan points out in this journal, if we define populism by its traditional characteristics – elevation of the leader, disdain for parliamentary procedure, vagueness about policy other than opposing the “corrupt old parties”, pretensions of being beyond Left and Right – the most successful example today is Emmanuel Macron, whom Anne-Elisabeth Moutet describes in these pages as heir to the long tradition of autocratic French movements – Bonapartism, Boulangism, Poujadism and, indeed, Gaullism. Despite his almost comical sense of *Führerprinzip*, however, the French President is not called “populist” because he happens to dislike national sovereignty and favour European integration.

Which raises a dilemma for pro-sovereignty conservatives.



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Should we treat the populist surge as a threat or an opportunity? Are angry and anti-systemic parties our adversaries or our allies? Ben Johnson argues that “the populist movement has the potential to become the liberty movement”, and urges conservatives to channel populism in sensible directions. Sir Roger Scruton, by contrast, believes that representative democracy is intrinsically anti-populist, and that the parliamentarian, as an office-holder, cannot in conscience follow every local whim – a position which, as Danny Kruger reminds us, was laid down by the grandfather of conservatism, Edmund Burke.


So which is it? Is populism a necessary and legitimate reaction against Left-liberal oligarchy? Or is it a menace to conservatives who (one hopes) believe in restraint, civility, tradition, decency and the defence of high culture?

The answer depends on circumstance. The essence of populism is a belief that those in power are governing in their own factional interest rather than in the interests of the people as a whole. To make what might seem a rather obvious point, the validity of the populist

reaction depends on the truth of that analysis. When power is diffused, dispersed and democratised, populism has a forced and ersatz quality. But when power is concentrated, closed and conceited, populism is a proper antibody.

The conservative ideal, surely, is a polity where populism doesn't have to arise, because the people who pass the laws are properly accountable to those who obey them. To put it another way, conservatives should want a society based on liberty under the law, and on a sense of affinity one with another that makes people willing to abide by majority decisions – what Professor Scruton calls the politics of the first-person plural.

Roger Kimball reminds us of one of Bill Buckley's favourite aphorisms – his assertion that he would rather be governed by 2000 people chosen at random from the Boston telephone directory than by the faculty of Harvard University. Buckley was right. Harvard academics, like any elite, are prone to follow false ideas out of groupthink. We can all think of policies that commanded the support of the Establishment, but were utterly wrong: nationalisation, price controls, the ERM, the euro, the bank bailouts. By and large, voters turned out to be wiser than their leaders.

The challenge of our time is to narrow the rift between the people and their elites, between the *paese reale* and the *paese legale*, between what David Goodhart in this issue calls Somewheres and Anywheres. That task cannot be accomplished by the Left: we have seen that demonstrated amply. Often, it is flunked by the Right, too. Closing that gap is arguably the single most important challenge for conservatives today. 



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

POLITICS NEEDS A FIRST-PERSON PLURAL

by Roger Scruton

Populists recruit their following by direct appeal, and are largely indifferent to their opponents, and have no intention, if elected, of allowing a voice to those who did not vote for them. If "populism" threatens the political stability of democracies, it is because it is part of a wider

failure to appreciate the virtue and the necessity of representation. For representative government to work, representatives must be free to ignore those who elected them, to consider each matter on its merits, and to address the interests of those who did not vote for them

just as much as the interests of those who did. The point was made two centuries ago by Edmund Burke that representation, unlike delegation, is an *office*, defined by its responsibilities. To refer every matter to the constituents and to act on majority opinion case by case is precisely to

avoid those responsibilities, to retreat behind the consensus, and to cease to be genuinely accountable for what one does.

In modern conditions, in which governments rarely enjoy a majority vote, most of us are living under a government of which we don't approve. We accept to be ruled by laws and decisions made by politicians with

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

The answer is that democracies are held together by something stronger than politics. There is a "first-person plural", a pre-political loyalty, which causes neighbours who voted in opposing ways to treat each other as fellow citizens, for whom the government is not "mine" or "yours" but "ours", whether or not we approve of it. Many are the flaws in this

system of government, but one feature gives it an insuperable advantage over all others so far devised, which is that it makes those who exercise power accountable to those who did not vote for them. This kind of accountability is possible only if the electorate is bound together

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

That simple observation reminds us that representative democracy injects hesitation, circumspection and

on mutual trust. We must trust our political opponents to acknowledge that they have the duty to represent the people as a whole, and not merely to advance the agenda of their own political supporters.

But what happens when that trust disintegrates? In



as a “we”. Only if this “we” is in place can the people trust the politicians to look after their interests. Trust enables people to co-operate in ensuring that the legislative process is reversible, when it makes a mistake; it enables them to accept decisions that run counter to their individual desires and which express views of the nation and its

accountability into the heart of government – qualities that play no part in the emotions of the crowd. Representative government is for this reason infinitely to be preferred to direct appeals to the people, whether by referendum, plebiscite or social media. But the observation also reminds us that accountable politics depends

particular, what happens when the issues closest to people’s hearts are neither discussed nor mentioned by their representatives, and when these issues are precisely issues of identity – of “who we are” and “what unites us”? This, it seems to me, is where we have got to in Western democracies – in the United States just as much

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

with other languages, other customs, other religions, other ways of life and other and competing loyalties. Worse than this is the fact that ordinary people have been forbidden to mention this, forbidden to complain about it publicly, forbidden even to begin the process of coming to terms with it by discussing what the costs and benefits might be.

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

True democrats are not like that. They are not in the business of recruiting people to a cause, and imposing their goals by majority opinion. They are in the business of government, which means discussion and compromise with those who disagree with

them. The populist leads a crowd, with a banner marked “Forward to victory!” Victory means overcoming opposition and then destroying it, in the manner of Lenin and Hitler, who worked by charisma, hysteria and mass enchantment in order to ascend to the pinnacle of power. True democrats cannot play that game. They aim to lead a civil society, not a crowd, and if they had a banner it would say merely “Hesitate!” – not, as you will agree, a winning slogan. 🐕



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THE MYTH OF ‘THE PEOPLE’ AGAINST THE ‘ELITES’

by John Laughland

Following the result of the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump in 2016, some irresponsible commentators predicted that an Anglo-American wave of populism would sweep across Europe too. They foresaw Marine Le Pen in the Elysée Palace and Geert Wilders as prime minister of the Netherlands. They even evoked the possibility of Angela Merkel’s CDU bleeding to death by haemorrhaging votes to *Alternative für Deutschland*. After the Dutch elections in March and the first round of the French presidential election on April 23, when Marine Le

Pen confounded all the opinion polls by coming second, not first, it became clear that this was all nonsense. Why?

First, the prediction of popular revolution sweeping out old elites was itself a product of ideology, not of analysis. The wish is father to the thought. The myth of “the people” rising up against hated and corrupt elites, which is at least as old as the French Revolution, is a seductive one, whose power over people’s minds seems only to have grown since the end of the Cold War.

The ostensibly revolutionary regimes in Eastern Europe

The prediction of popular revolution sweeping out old elites was itself a product of ideology, not of analysis. The wish is father to the thought.

– which were in reality socially and politically conservative – having themselves collapsed, the revolutionary mythology has migrated West instead. Fairy tales about “colour revolutions” from Belgrade to Baghdad have now excited the Western mind for two decades; the events in Kiev in 2014 were only the latest re-run of a script which has been played out identically in Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and

elsewhere. People believe in the fairy tale because it corresponds to Oscar Wilde’s definition of fiction: the good end happily and the bad unhappily.

Second, the Hegelian determinism underlying such predictions crassly fails to take account of two key factors in history: human agency and cultural difference. All countries are not the same and historical events depend on choices. Both the Brexit referendum and the election of Trump were particular events rooted in the political history and culture of their respective nations. They are not easily transposable to other lands.

It is well known, for instance, that the EU has been a major bone of contention in British politics, off and on, for 40 years: membership of that body never commanded the cross-party consensus, still less the emotional appeal, which it enjoys across the continent. (This is itself due in no small measure to Britain’s role in the Second World War, which was unique in Europe.)

Trump, for his part, benefited largely from the fact that the White House had been Democrat for eight years: his victory is less an aberration than the natural result of the normal electoral cycle of US politics, which, for the past

As for Trump, he won because he was the leader of the opposition and he was brought to power as the official candidate of one of the oldest political parties in the world. He did not win the popular vote.

two decades, has systematically seen the incumbent party lose the presidency after its second term.

As far as human agency is concerned, Marine Le Pen fought a bad campaign in which she showed herself to be ignorant and totally unprepared for high office. She has none of the human qualities of Nigel Farage,

whose unique selling point was that he transmitted the language of the pub into the public sphere, and that he did so with a smile and a laugh. Marine Le Pen's grim face, as grey as the sky in her fiefdom of Hénin-Beaumont, cheers nobody up.

Third, neither the Brexit vote nor the Trump victory can properly be called examples of populism. To be sure, the Brexiteers and Trump drenched their political discourse with the language of populism: Trump's inaugural speech, and UKIP's "People's Army", are textbook cases of anti-elitism.

On the other hand, the same is probably true of every single candidate in a democratic election: what else is Emmanuel Macron's "On the move!", a political party created out of nothing in order to destroy and replace France's existing political parties? Moreover, the idea that the Brexit campaign was based on a rebellion against elites, when six incumbent Cabinet ministers and several former heavy-weight ministers – including two Tory Chancellors of the Exchequer, now members of the House of Lords, as well as one of the best-spoken and talented orators of his generation (Daniel Hannan) – campaigned for it, is a

little quaint: you could hardly move in the Brexit camp for Oxbridge graduates and Old Etonians. As for Trump, he won because he was the leader of the opposition and he was brought to power as the official candidate of one of the oldest political parties in the world. He did not win the popular vote.

Fairy tales about "colour revolutions" from Belgrade to Baghdad have now excited the Western mind for two decades; the events in Kiev in 2014 were only the latest re-run of a script which has been played out identically in Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere. People believe in the fairy tale because it corresponds to Oscar Wilde's definition of fiction: the good end happily and the bad unhappily.

Far from being proof of the power of populism, the Brexit referendum and the Trump victory show instead the decisive role of the political establishment, in these cases the Conservative and Republican parties. These two outcomes are impossible to imagine without the support they received from that establishment. Marine

Le Pen and Geert Wilders, by contrast, not only flogged the anti-elitist horse until it was dead; by positioning themselves exclusively as angry anti-system candidates, and not as potential heads of state or government with the charisma necessary to draw people towards them in the name of a national project, they precisely demonstrated the insurmountable weakness of exclusively negative electioneering.

People in elections do not vote to clean out the Augean stables of a corrupt elite; they vote instead for a political leader in whom they can believe and whom they can respect. Populism fails where an air of natural authority, and the ability to be a true leader of men, wins. When everything seemed lost on June 18 1940, Churchill held out the prospect of "sunlit uplands"; he did not, like Marshal Pétain, plunge his country into the miasma of guilt and recrimination.

These are important lessons for conservatives. Political power is wielded through the institutions of the state, which conservatives seek to preserve and uphold because they are part of the fabric of civilisation. Political power consists in elevating the population towards higher things, and in consolidating the sense of

ELECTION PRESIDENTIELLE
ES 23 AVRIL ET 7 MAI 2017



nationhood which constitutes one of the greatest constructions of human civilisation: nations are to politics what cathedrals are to theology.

Power is never wielded by the will of the people, a debased and vacuous slogan, but instead only by its leaders. Marine Le Pen was consoled for her loss at the presidential election by winning a parliamentary seat in a desolate and *déclassé* proletarian constituency whose inchoate anger she certainly articulates; but the simple rules of sociology tell us that the ethic of such a place can never be a springboard to the

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leadership of a proud and ancient nation whose middle classes and political and business elites, however weakened they may be by decades of socialism, still do and should

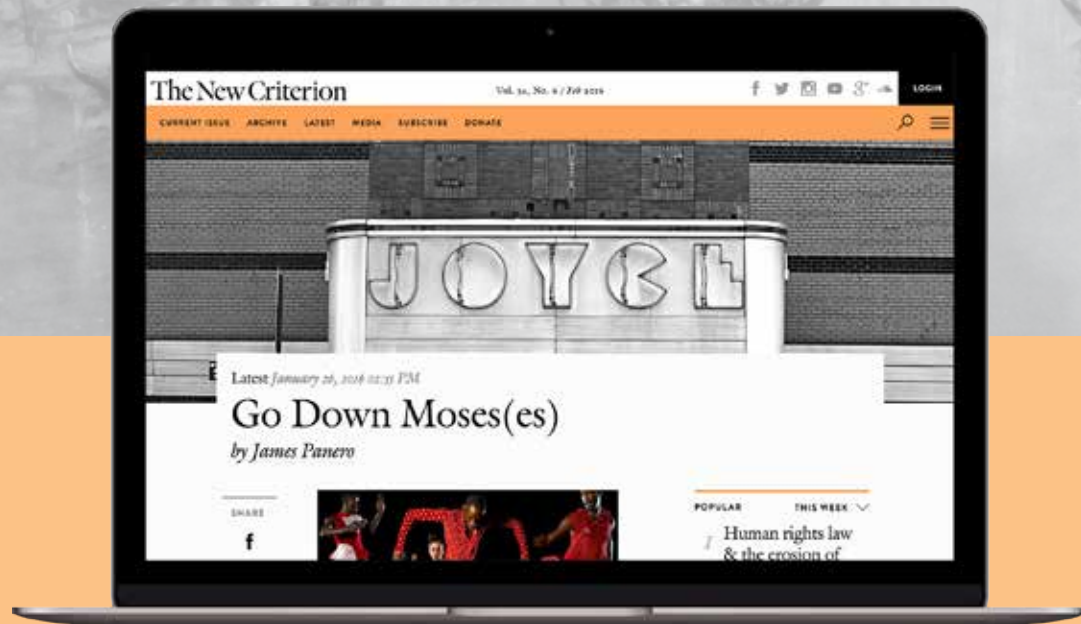
play a decisive role. Conservatives are not revolutionaries and revolutionaries are not conservatives. 🐕



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YOUTUBE: THE ALEXANDRIAN LIBRARY OF OUR TIME

by Jay Nordlinger

Not long ago, I was talking about nationality, and how names can fool you. I related a memory: When I was a kid, I assumed that John Ireland, the composer, had been Irish. Come to find out, he was English (and of Scottish descent). Though Anatole France, rest assured, was French.

Today, other than the hymn *My Song is Love Unknown* and the anthem *Greater Love Hath No Man*, which may be familiar to churchgoers, John Ireland is known for one piece, basically: his song *Sea Fever*, a setting of the poem of John Masefield. After talking about nationality and so on, I went to YouTube, looking for *Sea Fever*. My eyes fell on something else by Ireland: *Decorations*, a suite of three pieces for piano. They are fine, Impressionistic pieces, and they deserve to be programmed.



“Is YouTube the greatest invention since the wheel? I suppose you would have to say the internet is, for YouTube is part of the internet. But YouTube, to me, stands out.”

Jay Nordlinger

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I had never known about *Decorations*. I do now – and I have YouTube to thank.

Is YouTube the greatest invention since the wheel? I suppose you would have to say the internet is, for YouTube is part of the internet. But YouTube, to me, stands out.

I was making a trip to Norway. Before setting out, I wanted to listen to some Grieg. So I went to YouTube and my eyes fell on the *Holberg Suite*, in a piano version. (Usually, you hear this suite in its chamber-orchestra version.) The pianist was Maria Grinberg – and from the first notes, it was clear that she was an intelligent and dynamic pianist. Where had she been all my life?

She was a Russian pianist, living from 1908 to 1978. She was almost never allowed out to the West, and she was kept under a bushel at home, being out of favour with the authorities. But she lives on in YouTube. I wrote an article about her, borrowing my title from Broadway: “I Just Met a Girl Named Maria.” I received a note from a



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Russian arts journalist, who said: “Thank you! My piano teacher, who worshiped Grinberg, took me to the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory for a recital of the great lady’s.” The journalist will never forget Grinberg, and neither will I, now that I know her.

For weeks, I binged on Grinberg. Once I asked

various pieces by Schubert. The first one was the *Fantasy in F minor*, for piano duet. Later, I wanted to check a few things in it, so I went to YouTube. There were many, many recordings on offer. One of them was by James Levine and Evgeny Kissin, live in Carnegie Hall.

I attended that concert, actually, and reviewed it. It

I tend to use YouTube for the musical, but, of course, there are worlds of other material. In July, President Trump declared a certain week “Made in America Week.” I was writing about it and had a memory: years before, on television, there was another Made in America campaign, starring such celebrities as Bob Hope. I

Look for the Silver Lining. Anyway, I flicked my fingers: and there was the ad, on YouTube (1981).

What else can YouTube throw up? Well, I was thinking of Alicia de Larrocha, the late pianist, and in particular her playing of Rachmaninoff. She recorded very little of that composer. But I remembered hearing her play a group of

Once I asked Riccardo Muti, the Italian conductor, “Do you ever go on YouTube binges?” “No,” he said, somewhat incomprehending. But YouTube binges are among the healthier binges that people engage in.

But YouTube can contradict memory. Two of my favorite comedians when I was growing up were Jonathan Winters and Richard Pryor. I thought they were brilliantly funny. A couple of

Hess and Maestro Toscanini in Beethoven’s *Piano Concerto in C minor*. I had never known, or had forgotten, that Hess and Toscanini performed together. I went to YouTube. In about 1.5



Riccardo Muti, the Italian conductor, “Do you ever go on YouTube binges?” “No,” he said, somewhat incomprehending. But YouTube binges are among the healthier binges that people engage in.

The other week, I went to a *Schubertiade*, ie, a concert whose programme offered

was only in 2005. And the concert was turned into an album. Under the *Fantasy in F minor*, on YouTube, there were many comments. The first of them said, “I grew up with this CD.” “Grew up with”? That’s the sort of thing I might say about, for example, Wilhelm Kempff! But everyone has to start some time.

went to YouTube, and there it was: the very ad I had remembered. (The year was 1985.)

Furthermore, I remembered an ad in which people sang, “Look for the union label,” a song urging solidarity with organised labour. New words went with Jerome Kern’s old tune,

preludes in my hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Do you know that YouTube had them? Not all of them, but two of the preludes from that very recital? Yes, on October 18 1976.

I was 12 years old. And the playing, I’m glad to report, was exactly as I had remembered.

years ago, I YouTubed them: not so funny. It could be that I have changed, or that comedy doesn’t age well, or both.

Allow me a final YouTube story – a final testimony, so to speak. I have just read Harvey Sachs’s new biography of Arturo Toscanini, and he mentions a collaboration between Dame Myra

seconds, I had Hess, Toscanini, and Beethoven, from December 1946.

I don’t take it for granted, this Alexandrian library of sight and sound. Yet I have become accustomed to it. It is professionally helpful, personally satisfying, world-opening—and binge-worthy. 🐕



ARGENTINA'S PERONIST NIGHTMARE IS OVER

by Federico N. Fernández

The beginning of the 21st century found Argentina in the midst of a storm.

In 2001 the country was submerged in a deep recession which spiralled into a political crisis after the mid-term elections of October. By the end of that year, the administration led by Fernando de la Rúa fell and

more than a decade of populist policies followed.

The '90s looked nothing like the early 2000s. After the fall of the Berlin wall, the whole of Latin America, from Mexico to Argentina, experienced the so-called "neoliberal wave". In Argentina, neoliberalism meant a series of economic reforms.

Destructionism. It has produced nothing. It has created nothing. It has only parasitically lived off resources created by previous generations and favourable international contexts.

For instance, the privatisation of highly inefficient state monopolies – such as the one in telecommunications.

It also meant the reduction of public employees, and a relative opening of the economy. But the key issue was a monetary regime named "convertibility." The currency board implemented by the then minister of finance, Domingo Cavallo, almost immediately stopped a chronic and decades long inflationary problem which had evolved by 1989 into hyperinflation.

By the end of the '90s the inconsistencies of the economic program were causing imbalances, huge deficits, and unemployment. In 1998 the economy entered a prolonged period of recession. President de la Rúa came to power running a conservative campaign – promising to maintain convertibility and price stability but also to boost the economy and fight rampant corruption.

At the same time, Hugo Chávez was elected in Venezuela. The message of Chávez was diametrically opposed. It would be soon clear that the exhausted neoliberalism was going to be replaced – across the region – by a new wave of populism.

The seeds of neopopulism in Argentina were planted by President Eduardo Duhalde. An obscure figure from the province of Buenos Aires,



The currency board implemented by the then minister of finance, Domingo Cavallo, almost immediately stopped a chronic inflationary problem of decades which had evolved in 1989 into hyperinflation.

he arrived to the presidency thanks to a parliamentary procedure just two years after losing the elections to Mr. de la Rúa. Many claim that both Mr. Duhalde and the Peronist party were conspiring against the government

and eventually provoked its collapse.

The Duhalde administration will be remembered for two decisions. The first was the abolition of the convertibility regime. Leaving the convertibility regime was one of the most traumatic events in the country's history. Parity with the dollar had created a *de facto* dollar economy, since Argentines tended to distrust the peso. Politicians knew this. They also knew that it would be too hard to honour people's contracts and savings

in dollars. So they must have cried "Eureka" when somebody came with the concept of *asymmetrical devaluation* – which in practice meant the destruction of all existing contracts.

This procedure represented a major transfer of wealth. The losers were savers, people living on salaries, creditors of private dollarised contracts like mortgages, and many more. All of them saw their income and savings liquefied by an imposed exchange rate and the eroding power of inflation.



The second was the implementation of export taxes, *retenciones* in Spanish, to the agricultural sector. Not many countries in history have taxed their own exporters. The ones who have tend to be highly extractive economies with corrupt and inefficient political elites. Mr Duhalde seemed to be eager to join this pathetic club of Third World leaders.

In 2003 the Kirchner couple got into power. They remained for three consecutive terms for a total of twelve years (Néstor Kirchner 2003-07 and Cristina Kirchner 2007-15). The policy of export taxes was the cornerstone of their economic plan.

The twenty-first century has been so far a century of a weak dollar and an easy

monetary policy by the Federal Reserve. This easing is characterised by excess of liquidity and extremely low interest rates. International exchange rates have reacted accordingly, with a sinking dollar against the euro. Gold also experienced a rally unseen for many decades. This weakening process was accompanied by a boom in commodity prices.

Hanke, “the evidence suggests that the Federal Reserve is a major culprit in the commodity inflation story.”

It was this windfall which facilitated the implementation of the populist agenda of the Argentinian government. It is the key ingredient of its destructive recipe. The Kirchners simply adapted the Venezuelan model to local conditions. The government of Venezuela exercises ownership and control of the national oil company, PDVSA, while the Argentinian government, starting with the unelected transition administration of 2002-3, heavily taxed commodity exports.

The rise of Argentinian (and Venezuelan) populism must take into consideration the Federal Reserve’s monetary policy and its impact on commodity prices. Contrary to the claims of their propaganda apparatus – which spanned public education, media, and the intellectuals – the driving force of the sociopolitical process in both countries is not the so-called “accumulation model with social inclusion” or the “Bolivarian revolution” but chiefly the dollar cycle and its commodity price repercussions.

Democratic order returned to Argentina in 1983. Between

Thus, the rise of Argentinian (and Venezuelan) populism must take into consideration the Federal Reserve’s monetary policy and its impact on commodity prices.

than and 2015, Peronists were in power for 24 out of 32 years. The only exceptions to their hegemony were the Alfonsín (1983-1989) and de la Rúa administrations (1999-2001). Both of these finished before they were supposed to.

The pervasive populist influence of Peronism can be traced back to the late 1940s. Since then, Peronism has had a hegemonic influence over the political life of the country. Gabriel Zanotti believes this is precisely the “cultural drama” of Argentina and compares it to the hypothetical situation of Germany today having had an extremely popular National Socialist party, and all the other German parties copying and imitating the Nazi agenda.

The economic programme of the Peronists, and the populists of all parties, aptly described by a term coined by Ludwig von Mises: Destructionism. It has produced nothing. It has created nothing. It has only parasitically lived off resources created by previous generations



The current president, Mauricio Macri, went to elections offering a clear anti-populist alternative. He won in an election that was as surprising and shocking as Brexit and Trump.

pundits, pollsters, and even the business community could (and should) be attributed to underlying tendencies within Argentine society. These tendencies are not yet fully appreciated. It could be the case that Macri's victory is a symptom of something much deeper. Namely, that Argentinians have had enough of populism. 🐾

and favourable international contexts.

But after seven decades of political dominance, hegemonic populism seems to be showing signs of exhaustion. The once mighty Peronist party is today reduced to a feeble league of northern feudal lords and the most impoverished suburban belt of the province of Buenos Aires. It may be that the excesses of former president Cristina Kirchner marked the pinnacle of the Peronist power and the start of its decline.

After so many years of populist mismanagement, the economic decadence – and frustration – is palpable. The defeated presidential candidate Daniel Scioli ran a

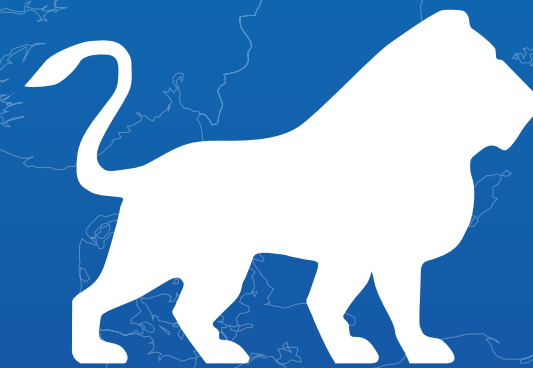
campaign in 2015 promising to build sewers for the population. Yet Mr. Scioli himself was governor of Buenos Aires for eight years and his party was in office in that province between 1987 and 2015. Twenty-eight years, apparently, were not enough for Peronism to solve the sewage situation.

The current president, Mauricio Macri, went to elections offering a clear anti-populist alternative. He won in an election that was as surprising and shocking as Brexit and Trump. He did very well in all sectors of society, including the worse-off.

The surprise that Macri's election provoked among



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TRUMP: NEITHER CONSERVATIVE NOR REPUBLICAN

by Dominic Green

“You dance with the one that brung you,” goes the American saying. In 2016, Donald Trump carried the Republican Party to the White House, Inauguration Ball and all. Now, however, the party’s leaders are uncomfortable with his clinch. Trump’s administration has failed to find its feet. It has proven unable to co-ordinate its steps with the Republican majorities in the House and Senate, and has yet to generate a significant piece of legislation. Trump himself has degraded his office, and not just by gratuitously stepping on other people’s toes without apology. What will happen to the Republican Party when the music stops? And what of American conservatism after the Republican dance with populism?

The Republicans still call themselves the Party of Lincoln: the party that was founded as an anti-slavery caucus, the party that defeated the worst institutional racism in the history of Western democracy. Trump’s equivocal condemnation of the racist and neo-fascist

fringe after the riot in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August makes a mockery of that legacy. Similarly, his misogyny and his bullying prevent the Republicans from claiming the moral high ground of American life. But then, what kind of Republican is Donald Trump?

Trump has no constituency among the Republican factions of Washington DC. He is neither an evangelical by conviction nor a social conservative by habit, but a libertine. He is not a free marketer; in economics, his policies would amount to autarky. He professes isolationism, but has recapitalised his business like a globalist, by franchising golf courses and luxury developments overseas. Before his turn from reality television to politics, he registered first as a Democrat and then as an Independent. He donated to the Democratic Party, and played golf with Bill Clinton.

Trump is a plutocrat and a populist, not a Democrat or a Republican. He overran the Republican nomination

If the Republicans fail to distance themselves from Trump’s odious statements, they will tar themselves as the party of dog-whistlers and alt-right cranks for at least a generation.

process like a successful contestant in a reality television show, by rallying the audience against the judges. He repeated this trick in the season finale against a feeble Hillary Clinton. He is not of the party of Lincoln or Reagan. He is not even of the palaeo-party of Pat Buchanan. Trump is of the party of Berlusconi. And we all know how his party ended.

Yet Trump’s ratings are still high among his supporters. Since 2008, the inequities of American life, and the intimacy of the politicians and the plutocrats, have become so obvious that both of America’s parties have faced a revolt of their masses. First, the Republican base rebelled in the Tea Party. Then, the Democratic-aligned Left took to the streets as Occupy.

The leadership of both parties responded in the same way. They tried to master the



populist revolts – not so much to address the grievances, as to capitalise on the energy. In Obama and Trump, the parties selected presidential candidates who vowed to revive America’s unwritten contract, the promise of an ever-rising middle-class – Obama by a great leap forwards into technocracy, Trump by a great leap backwards into the protectionism of Smoot-Hawley, and the kind of policies which, when implemented by FDR in the Thirties, may well have prolonged the Depression.

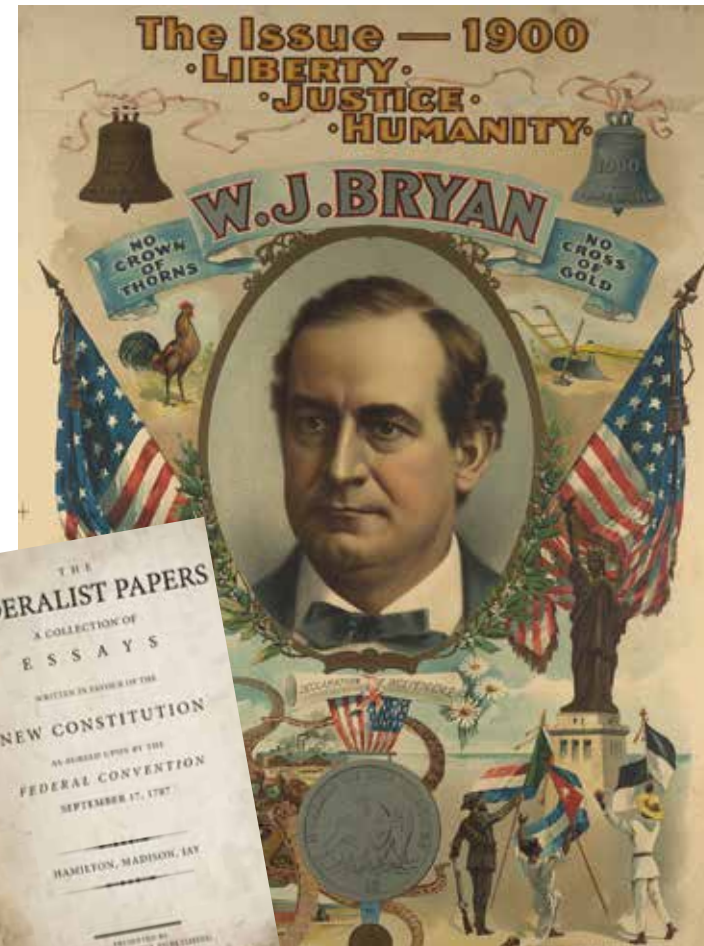
Meanwhile, ambitious minor figures on the

margins of each party sought to mobilise the insurgents. In 2010, Rand Paul, then running for the Senate, suggested the formation of a Tea Party Caucus in the House of Representatives. In 2015, the Freedom Caucus, in many ways the successor to the Tea Party Caucus, succeeded in replacing John Boehner, the Speaker of the House and a mainstream Republican, with Paul Ryan. And in 2016, Bernie Sanders came

Trump is of the party of Berlusconi. And we all know how his party ended.

close to winning the Democratic nomination – so close, in fact, that the pro-Clinton party leadership conspired to block his run.

If elected leaders dishonour their promises to the electorate, if institutions are incapable of repairing their decay, and if key sectors of the economy appear to be run by government-sanctioned cartels, then populism is inevitable. It might even be necessary as a corrective. But, like chemotherapy for cancer, the cure is a poison. The architects of the American system recognised this.



populist William Jennings Bryan ran three times as the Democratic presidential candidate, and lost each time. Theodore Roosevelt, his Republican populist rival, became president in 1901 because William McKinley was assassinated, and struggled to control the Republicans in Congress. Still, though the system repelled Bryan and expelled Roosevelt, the anti-trust laws and party reforms of the Progressive Era expressed the populist energies that Bryan and Roosevelt had encouraged and manipulated.

It is not clear how America’s current wave of populism will translate into legislation reflecting the country’s “true interest”. In both parties, the base is antagonistic towards its leadership. When the Republican leadership made its cynical alliance with Donald Trump, it made the party a hostage to the mood of the mob and the caprice of a bigot.

If the Republicans fail to distance themselves from Trump’s odious statements, they will tar themselves as the party of dog-whistlers and alt-right cranks for at least a generation. If the Republicans fail to produce legislation that addresses America’s economic and social dislocation, they will suggest that,

and court, and the mutual restraints of “checks and balances”. Like Gulliver on the beach at Lilliput, the will of the *demos* is restricted by the procedures of a republic ruled by “a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations”.

Americans elect their president by what Madison called “pure” democracy and we call “direct democracy”. Hence the division of powers between executive, legislature

Gulliver, we recall, got up and walked. In an earlier Gilded Age, the agrarian

like the Whigs in the 1840s, they have lost their purpose as a party. Either or both of these circumstances will exclude them from office.

And while conservatism and the Republicans are not identical in theory, they have become so in practice – or at least, they were linked in practice until Trump’s candidacy. Trump is no more a conservative than he is a Republican. But while the Republican Party went with Trump, conservative pundits and intellectuals led the “Never Trump” movement, with some supporting Evan McMullin as an independent candidate.

Trump is a plutocrat and a populist, not a Democrat or a Republican. He overran the Republican nomination process like a successful contestant in a reality television show, by rallying the audience against the judges.

Paradoxically, American conservatism is a collateral victim twice over – ridiculed by Trump’s Know-Nothing populism, yet soiled by association with the Republicans. This is a double blow to the most dynamic intellectual force in American politics. It will not be the

populist presidency’s last injury to the American body politic. As Mencken said: “Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.” 🐶



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CONSERVATIVE ICONS

ATHWART HISTORY, YELLING “STOP!” William F Buckley Jr.

by Roger Kimball



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

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

How could such a man prefer a promiscuous sampling of the census rolls to the educated tony-ness of Harvard? Maybe he was just

joshing, pulling your leg with a wink and a nod.

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

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

I am morally certain that Bill Buckley would have supported Brexit – Brussels, after all, is a sort of super-Harvard, at least in its smugness, lack of accountability, and sense of entitlement. What he would have thought about the candidacy of Donald Trump is more difficult to discern. The one column that I am aware he wrote about Trump was highly critical, but it was written years ago and took no cognisance

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

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Goldwater didn't stand a chance of winning in 1964, but his candidacy was part of the galvanising force that ushered Ronald Reagan into the White House 15 years later.

of the fundamental datum of the 2016 Presidential election: that it came down to a choice between Hillary Clinton, whom Bill held in contempt, and Donald Trump.

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

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

of representing a robust and coherent conservative vision of the world.

It was the same in the 1965 New York mayoral race, whose chief entertainment was the candidacy of Bill Buckley himself. Bill hadn't a chance of winning. Indeed, when asked what he would do if he were to win, he famously replied: “Demand a recount.” But Bill's candidacy was *viable* because it enabled

In one of his earliest essays, from 1951, Bill wrote about Friedrich von Hayek's Road to Serfdom and limned two critical dangers facing liberty: the external threat of Communist imperialism and the homegrown threat of “government paternalism”.

him to put before the public an articulate case for various important conservative ideas.

The underlying point is that powerful ideas can have powerful consequences. Goldwater didn't stand a chance of winning in 1964, but his candidacy was part of the galvanising force that ushered Ronald Reagan into the White House 15 years later. Bill's mayoral race didn't see him into Gracie Mansion, the mayor's official residence,

but it was one of the propaedeutic elements that helped see his brother Jim into the US Senate a few years down the road. Can something similar be said about Donald Trump? I think so, but I appreciate that opinions on that score vary sharply.

Let me therefore move on to a Buckleyism even more famous than his *mot* about the advantages of the Boston phone book compared to the faculty of Harvard. I mean Bill's declaration of war against the Left-liberal consensus in 1955 in the inaugural issue of *National Review*. Bill noted that the new magazine would be out of place “in the sense that the United Nations and the League of Women Voters and the *New York Times* and Henry Steele Commager are in place”. It is out of place, he said, because, in its maturity, “literate America rejected conservatism in favour of radical social experimentation”. The brash new magazine had arrived with its brash young editor to cast a cold and inquisitive light upon that presumption. *National Review* “stands athwart history,” Bill announced, “yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it.”

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



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

now facing Western polities? Ideas, Bill observed in that editorial, “rule the world.” What ideas? Liberty for one. The United States was “conceived in liberty,” as Lincoln put it. The idea of individual freedom and its guarantor, limited government, were the country’s cynosure, its guiding principle. By 1955, that principle had been insidiously undermined by the well-intentioned dispensations of “literate America,” intoxicated as it was by “radical social experimentation.” Think of it: in 1955, Bill

Buckley, not yet 30, argued that “There never was an age of conformity quite like this one.” And today? Looking back, we understand that the dampening spirit of conformity and the assault on freedom were then in their infancy. They have suddenly come of age. The question is not whether Bill’s inaugural bulletin is still pertinent. It could hardly be more so. The question is whether those “uncorroded by a cynical contempt for human freedom” will command the wit, rhetoric, and moral courage

to stand athwart tomorrow whispering, confiding, explaining – sometimes even yelling “Stop!” – in order that freedom might have an opportunity to prevail.

In one of his earliest essays, from 1951, Bill wrote about Friedrich von Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom* (itself only seven or eight years old) and limned two critical dangers facing liberty: the external threat of Communist imperialism and the homegrown threat of “government paternalism.” The fall of the Soviet colossus signaled not the end

but the dissipation of the former threat, its distribution over a more amorphous field of action. The threat of government paternalism is today more patent than ever. Indeed, reading through Bill’s essays, I am often brought up short by a sense of historical foreshortening: Bill was writing in 1957 or 1967 or 1977, but his essays read as if they were written yesterday, or possibly this morning. Environmentalism. The oil crisis. The Religious Right. States’ rights. Reforming health care. Immigration, illegal and the other kind. The future of Social Security. Israel. Irresponsible accusations of racism. The Supreme Court. Iran and the bomb. The substance as well as the subject might have been taken from what is happening now, today.

In part, no doubt, the contemporaneous feel of so much that Bill wrote is explained by a passage from *Ecclesiastes*: “Nothing new is under the sun.” But there was also Bill’s unerring instinct for the pertinent. When he wrote about a matter of public interest, he went for, and generally hit upon, the jugular. I do not mean only that he deployed the successful debater’s trick of touching on spots that were sore or weak.

Bill was an able debater, and was plenty adept at ferreting out and exposing his opponents’ weaknesses, evasions, ambiguities, enthymemes, and unwarranted presumptions. But he also had a conspicuous talent for getting to the heart of a matter. And so whether his subject was environmentalism, school choice, race relations, religious observances, foreign policy, or encroaching statism, what he wrote was likely to touch upon what was central and enduring. That is one of the benefits of conservatism: embracing the permanent, one may be unfashionable, but one is never out of date. Literature, said Ezra Pound, is news that stays news. I have met few people better informed about public affairs than Bill Buckley. But his mastery of the day’s ephemera was only a prelude to his embrace of the principles that underlay the controversies.

Like Athena, Bill seems to have sprung forth fully armed. He was barely graduated from Yale College when he published *God and Man at Yale*. The book catapulted its 20-something author to an atmosphere of hostile notoriety from which, despite Bill’s later acceptance by the world of high society, he never completely descended.

It is difficult at this distance to recreate the stir – no, the tornado – that book precipitated. American readers may recall the apoplexy that greeted Allan Bloom's book *The Closing of the American Mind* in the late-1980s. My, how the Left-wing academic establishment loved to hate that book! Double that enmity, treble it: that will give you some sense of the hostility that engulfed *God and Man at Yale*. Bill's opening credo that "the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world" was simply not to be borne. His codicil – "I further believe that the struggle between individualism [ie, conservatism] and collectivism is the same struggle reproduced on another level" – elevated disbelief into rage. The liberal establishment, Dwight Macdonald observed at the time, "reacted with all of the grace and agility of an elephant cornered by a mouse." McGeorge Bundy pronounced anathema upon the book in *The Atlantic Monthly*. The (then) well-known Yale philosopher TM Greene deployed the word "fascist" three times in as many sentences. "What more," Professor Greene asked, "could Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin ask for?"

The bottom line: there is plenty of room for "diversity," so long as you embrace the Left-liberal dogma. Diverge from that dogma and you will quickly find that the rhetoric of diversity has been replaced by talk of "prejudice," "hate speech," and the entire lexicon of Left-liberal denunciation.

Well, as Bill observed in his response, "they asked for, and got, a great deal more."

In retrospect, the reaction to *Gamay* (as the book was nicknamed by the Beaujolais-minded publisher) is partly amusing, partly frightening. The amusing part arises from the elephant-cornered-by-mouse aspect Dwight Macdonald mentioned. The frightening part comes when you realise how contemporary Bill's travails seem. Professor Greene went on to pontificate that

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

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

Sound familiar? But this, Bill rightly noted, is "ne plus ultra relativism, idiot nihilism." No ethical code requires "honest respect" for every divergent opinion. "Eating people is wrong," as Flanders and Swann put it, and you needn't be Aristotle to extend the list of things unworthy of toleration no matter what a "divergent opinion" might dictate. "Complete moral tolerance," as James Fitzjames



Stephen noted in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873), "is possible only when men have become completely indifferent to each other – that is to say, when society is at an end." Besides, Professor Greene's aria about tolerance would have been sweeter – or at least ostensibly more plausible – had he deigned to practice what he preached. "An honest respect by him for my divergent conviction," Bill wrote, "would have been an arresting application at once of his theoretical and his charitable convictions."

The nerve that Bill struck with *God and Man at Yale* is still smarting; indeed, it is

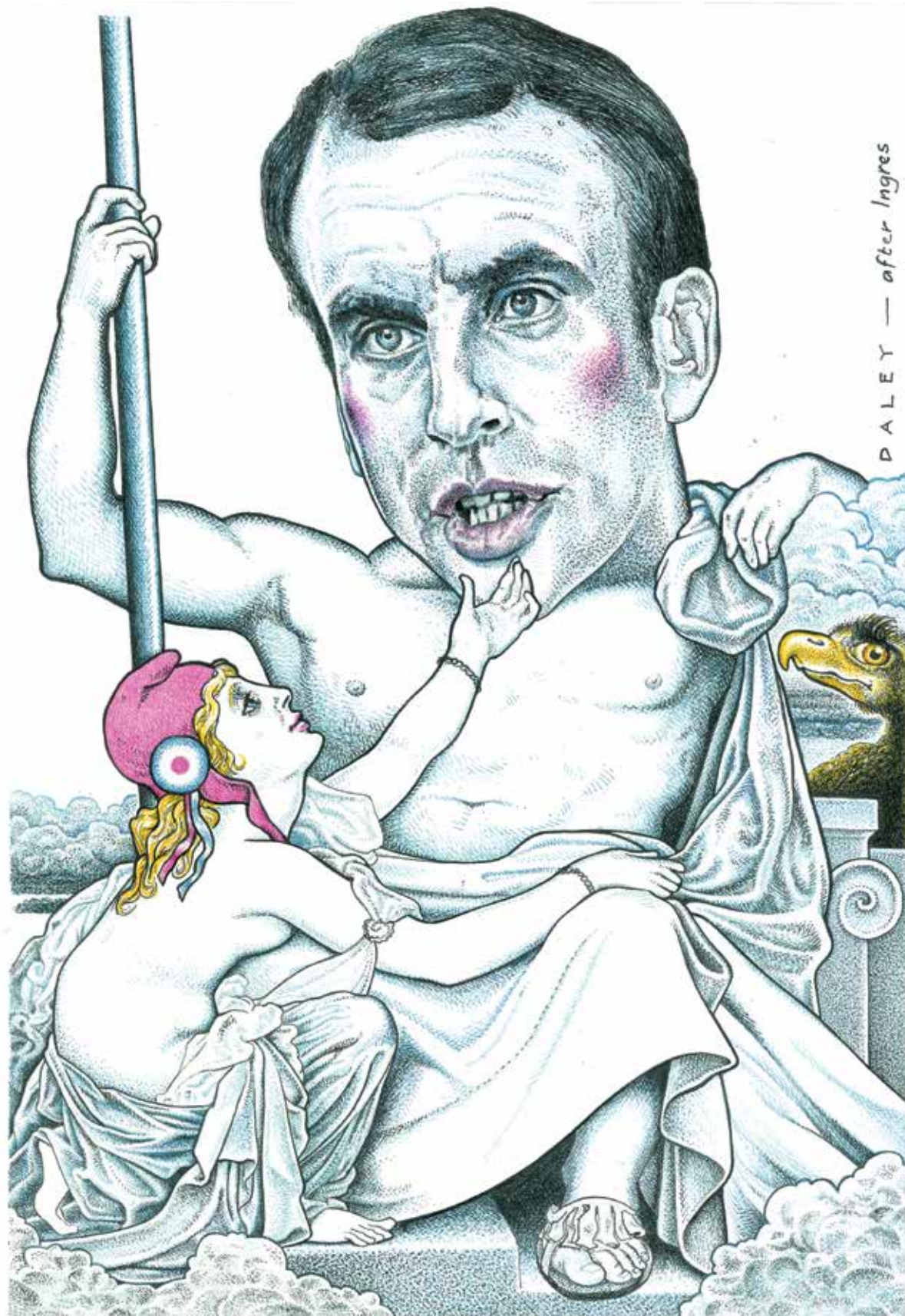
throbbing uncontrollably, as anyone can attest who has contemplated the discrepancy between proclamations of "diversity" on campuses in Western academia and the practice there of enforcing a politically correct orthodoxy on any contentious subject. The bottom line: there is plenty of room for "diversity," so long as you embrace the Left-liberal dogma. Diverge from that dogma and you will quickly find that the rhetoric of diversity has been replaced by talk of "prejudice," "hate speech," and the entire lexicon of Left-liberal denunciation.

Every life can be characterised by one or two governing attitudes. Perhaps the word that best characterised Bill was "relish." The depth and variousness of Bill Buckley's many avocations reflect the depth and variousness of his attitudes. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wasn't wrong about everything, devoted a book to Representative Men, men who epitomised some essential quality: Shakespeare; or, the Poet; Napoleon; or, the Man of the World; Goethe; or, the Writer. Bill Buckley is, in Emerson's sense, a Representative Man. One cannot quite imagine Emerson getting his mind around

a character like William F Buckley Jr. But if one can conjure up a less gaseous redaction of Emerson, one may suppose him writing an essay called Buckley; or, the Conservative.

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

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



IN THE SHADOW OF BONAPARTE

by Anne-Elisabeth Moutet

If populism is about the reality, or the illusion, of loss, its latest manifestation in France, the election of Emmanuel Macron, a consummate insider whose polished youthfulness, education, career and connections guaranteed him a position in the country's most rarefied elites anyway, makes more sense.

The French are not harking back to their lost Empire, or to the days of the monarchy, or to a wealth of jobs created by market forces. What they really want to see again are *Les Trente Glorieuses*, the three decades from 1946 to 1974. These saw the country rebuild itself at an annual growth of 5 per cent, with Marshall Plan subsidies, a Five-Year Plan, and a slew of nationalisations: coal, steel, electricity, gas, transport, the largest banks and insurance companies, and the odd business owned by notorious collaborators, such as the carmaker Renault. *Les Trente Glorieuses* were overseen by a dedicated, competent and largely selfless cadre of civil servants, many of whom came from the *Résistance*, and all familiar with the historical blueprint provided by

Philippe-Auguste, Colbert and Napoleon.

Anyone looking for a lesson on successful reconstruction could do worse than study that rare moment in the 1950s and 1960s when France managed the charmed balance of private enterprise and public stewardship of the economy. French conservatives were known to joke about the perils of French planning, "because, unlike in the Soviet Union, it worked". The first oil embargo sealed its fate: its time had probably passed anyway.

Ever since, the country has lived in the illusion that its unique combination of efficient social welfare, rising salaries, public infrastructure investment, national and foreign private investment, and comparatively tame unions (you could then, and can still now, prompt the fiercest Communist Party card-carrying CGT union official to outrage by describing the sabotage routinely perpetrated on British plants' assembly lines by the unions in the 1970s) can be replicated.

Marine Le Pen promised nothing else as she raised the National Front's share of the vote to 34 per cent last May: her platform included

Ever since, the country has lived in the illusion that its unique combination of efficient social welfare, rising salaries, public infrastructure investment, national and foreign private investment, and comparatively tame unions can be replicated.

a generous dollop of state intervention, social protection, even some nationalisations. The French, in the grip of *dégagisme* (kicking any incumbents out), might have voted for her if the choice had been between her and the tired old men of yesterday: Hollande, Fillon, Juppé or Sarkozy.

But Macron, with his brand new party, brand new look, and insolent youth, seemingly disdainful of old hierarchies and old practices, appeared to offer an alternative both safer and somehow more exciting. Marine lost her chance in the fatal pre-runoff debate, in which she came underprepared, blowsy and blustery. "*Elle n'est pas présidentielle,*" was the verdict even among her own supporters on Twitter: faced with their own Trump, in the end, they trusted Macron

Like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each European nation does populism in its own way. French populism has rarely been about rough-hewn "Men Of The People" vowing to upend the social order.

better, not in spite of his past as an elite civil servant, but because of it. Which is a rational choice if you want *Les Trente Glorieuses* back.

Like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each European nation does populism in its own way. French populism has rarely been about rough-hewn "Men Of The People" vowing to upend the social order. General Georges Boulanger, a hero of the French-Prussian war and the conquest of Indochina, ran as a militaristic, anti-German candidate simultaneously in half a dozen constituencies in 1888, and was elected in four. He led his own party, whose MPs mostly came from the Left and far-Left, while being financed by the Duchesse d'Uzès, a descendant of La Veuve Clicquot of Champagne fame, and supported by both Royalists and Bonapartist.

Pierre Poujade, the Auvergnat shopkeeper who led an anti-Parliamentarian,

anti-elite, anti-Rome Treaty revolt in the mid-1950s and won 52 MPs in 1956, was the son of a solidly bourgeois architect. His slogan "*Sortez les sortants*" ("get rid of the incumbents") was re-used by the National Front, Mélenchon's *La France Insoumise*, and many Macroniens, *sans* attribution, in last spring's campaign.



Both movements, which each could for a couple of years bring out hundreds of partisans in the streets, came to early, tame ends. Boulanger himself, on the day of January 1889 when he was elected Député of Paris, refused to bow to the pressure of some 50,000 voters gathered on Place de la Madeleine, outside the brasserie where he celebrated his victory, and would not lead them to take the Elysée Palace nearby. (He died two years later in obscurity in

Brussels, shooting himself on the grave of his beloved mistress.)

Poujade's party, the *Union de Défense des Commerçants et Artisans*, simply vanished when General de Gaulle came back to power in 1958. Again, between the countryside upstart and the war hero, who while seemingly away from the political fray had cannily built a trans-party movement called the *Rassemblement Pour La France*, the French chose *en masse*. (Georges Pompidou, the General's longest-serving PM before becoming President himself, cannily detailed Poujade to help draft a couple of bills aimed at keeping small tradesmen onside.)

Further back, even before the word was coined, French populism always had a distinct flavour. It's hard properly to call the French Revolution "populist", although figures like Marat and Hébert certainly qualify. Bonapartism, on the other hand, exhibits most of the key characteristics, from the coup-installed Providential Leader to the creation of an entire new ruling class. The after-effects of Bonapartism, long after Napoleon's death, fuelled every single uprising of the 19th Century: the short years of the First



Empire, with its mammoth legislative achievements, administrative restructuring of France and glorification of science, becoming a hallowed *Vingt Glorieuses* in French minds from Balzac to La Fayette, Victor Hugo and Berlioz.

Napoleon himself was in many ways replicating, in the neoclassical vernacular, an age-old tradition in which French kings, claiming a mystical direct connection to their peoples, set themselves up as autocratic popular defenders against a hidebound aristocracy. From Philip II to Louis XIV, this meant strengthening a centralised, technocratic domination over the country, and the appropriation of the fiefdoms and provinces of anyone trying to rebel. (Every noble revolt was lost in France over the centuries, possibly resulting in a largely irrelevant upper-middle

class often deserving of Karl Marx's strictures.)

Similarly, Emmanuel Macron seems to believe that he can now transmogrify the populist expectations his campaign gave rise to by a judi-

Emmanuel Macron seems to believe that he can now transmogrify the populist expectations his campaign gave rise to by a judicious balance of authoritarianism and journalism-free spin.

icious balance of authoritarianism and journalism-free spin. In less than three months, the self-described "President Jupiter" has managed to push out four political allies and the Chief of Defence Staff, largely segregated himself from the Elysée press pack, and has announced he would not keep those civil service mandarins who disagree with him. In the meantime, he has indulged in

a series of *shticks*, including answering the Elysée switchboard himself (filmed only by his own cameraman), dressing up in the uniform of each of the three armed services, showing off all the extra features inside the Presidential limo to a hand-picked kid, and making his wife godmother to the first baby panda born in a French zoo.

All that remains to be seen is whether this serves him well enough, or whether French populist voters decide that after all, the two extreme opposition parties, FI and the FN, appear more believable populists. 🐶



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WELCOME TO MASS DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

by Douglas Carswell

There is something wrong with the way we are run – and if we don't fix it, some profoundly un-conservative politicians will try to.

Something extraordinary is happening in politics. New radicals are on the rise. In Britain, the United States and much of Europe, angry, insurgent voices – which would not even have found an audience a generation ago – can be heard.

Whether victorious in elections, like Donald Trump in America, or Syriza in Greece, or simply successful enough to form the opposition, like Jeremy Corbyn in Britain or Marine Le Pen in

France, these new radicals all have one thing in common; whichever side of the political spectrum they are supposed to come from, they are all offering the electorate ideas from beyond the range of what was once considered the political mainstream.

Why? What explains this new phenomenon?

“It's the economy,” insists a certain sort of political pundit. Having woken up to emergence of political outsiders, many insiders reach for their default explanation for voter behaviour. “Those who vote for these new radicals are losers, who have lost out to globalisation.”

If economically distressed blue-collar workers explained the rise of Donald Trump, why is it that his most fervent supporters in the primary elections earned on average \$72,000 a year, way above the US national average?

Really?

Over the past 30 years, hundreds of millions of additional workers from China, India and the former Soviet block have joined the global economy. Yes, this might mean that labour is cheaper in relation to capital than it would otherwise have been. Unskilled blue-collar wages in America today are

roughly where they were when Ronald Reagan first entered the White House. But globalisation has dramatically cut the cost of consumer goods for those workers too, lowering the cost of living and raising living standards.

If economically distressed blue-collar workers explained the rise of Donald Trump, why is it that his most fervent supporters in the primary elections earned on average \$72,000 a year, way above the US national average?

When pundits explain the rise of the new radicals in terms of rising income inequality, they are simply trying to commandeer this new phenomenon to support their pre-existing world view.

So what does explain the rise of the new radicals? The sort of angry voices that rage against “the elite” are being heard for one simple reason: they can be. Digital technology makes them audible. A generation ago, only approved insiders got airtime. Digital creates an array of competing platforms for news. It has democratised communication and the process of opinion forming.

If anything, income inequality has fallen. The big increase in income inequality in America happened in the 1980s – before this latest process of globalisation

began. The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, shows that income inequality in Britain is at a 30-year low. In fact, since the 2007 financial crisis, the incomes of the bottom 10 percent have increased faster than those of the top 10 percent.

So what does explain the rise of the new radicals? The sort of angry voices that rage against “the elite” are being heard for one simple reason: they can be. Digital technology makes them audible. A generation ago, only approved insiders got airtime. Digital creates an array of competing platforms for news. It has democratised communication and the process of opinion forming.

That might explain why populist advocates and ideas get airtime. But why do they find an audience? What explains the rage? Was populist anger always there?

“Populism,” many political observers claim, “is all about those who are ill at ease with modernity.” But what if this populism was actually made possible by modernity? We now live in a world where consumers have control. From Netflix to Amazon Prime, people now expect to get what they want, when they want it. Self-selection and choice are cultural norms.

Whether or not our political elites are more or less accountable to the electorate than they were in generation of

While a rich elite in London concern themselves with building swimming pools in their basements, millions living in the South-East of England under the age of 40 cannot afford to buy their own home.

so ago is debatable. But public expectations about accountability have never been higher. It is this that has helped fuel the sense that politics is a cartel – and in a sense it is.

In Britain, most parliamentary constituencies are “safe seats”, almost guaranteed never to change hands between political parties at a General Election – insulating the incumbent MP from

his or her own electorate. In America, instead of voters choosing their representatives, gerrymandering allows representatives to choose their electorates. In many European countries, the party list system ensures small elites, rather than the voters, get to decide who gets elected.

At the same time, there’s a growing sense that the economy, notionally free-market, is rigged. While the returns on capital invested in large FTSE firms over the past 15 years has been modest, the executive pay packets of those running them has almost doubled.

Income inequality might not have increased, but asset prices have soared – making the “haves” rich for simply



having assets, be it a house or a hedge fund. While a rich elite in London concern themselves with building swimming pools in their basements, millions living in the South-East of England under the age of 40 cannot afford to buy their own home.

There is something cronyish at the heart of our capitalist system, with its easy money subsidies for big banks. A radical overhaul of banking is needed to ensure that those who own them are liable for their losses, so that they can no longer conjure up credit – and make a series

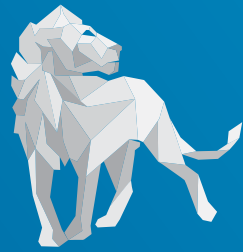
of one-way bets underwritten by the rest of us. Corporate law needs to be changed to ensure that those who own firms control those who run them. Those on whom we confer the privilege of limited liability when they conduct business cannot be allowed to run corporate boards as self-enriching cliques.

If capitalism is to flourish, we need to redefine capital itself, so that states cannot control the currency in the interests of officialdom. Those of us who believe in free-market capitalism need to advocate

far-reaching reforms – if we don’t, there will be plenty of charlatans and snake oil salesmen out there who will. 🐕



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New Direction

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NOT ALL ROSÉ

by Iain Martin



Can President Macron restore France to greatness? That was the question dominating French affairs this summer. As the natives made for their holiday homes in villages littered with “for sale” signs, or pursued cheaper pleasures if they are less affluent, they were happy to explain to tourists over a glass of wine what it means to have an energetic new head of state who for a while at least gave them cause for optimism.

Expectations of the youngster Macron were sky high in early summer, it was clear. Our English hostess at a dinner party in the Ardèche introduced two of her most longstanding and most stylish friends. They are voters of the Left who hoped that Macron’s youthful energy would produce change, although there is no consensus on what that change should involve. But elections are only half the story, one of the British guests pointed out. France is also about the politics of the street, and when Macron makes his moves this autumn and winter then won’t the trade

poured at the local cooperative by petrol pump. I somehow came away from the conversation without a hang-over, yet more convinced than ever that Macron is a Blairite soufflé in the process of collapsing.

For those of us of a conservative disposition, who perhaps all along saw Macron as a rather ridiculous cross between Tony Blair and Napoleon Bonaparte, the President’s honeymoon phase was awkward. Charismatic leaders who promise too much, and become hooked on their own publicity, usually fail in the end, but point this out too early and it comes across as overly cynical. Give the boy a chance, is the response.

And yes, although Macron emerged from the summer with ratings plunging through the floor, it is essential that he succeeds. A weak France is not in the interests of Europe or of the wider West. The creation of the euro, and the resolution (so far) of the eurozone crisis, has strengthened Germany, and Europe needs rebalancing. France does security

“As we listened, we drank some surprisingly enjoyable rosé, on the survivable side of toxic, that I had dreaded.”

Iain Martin

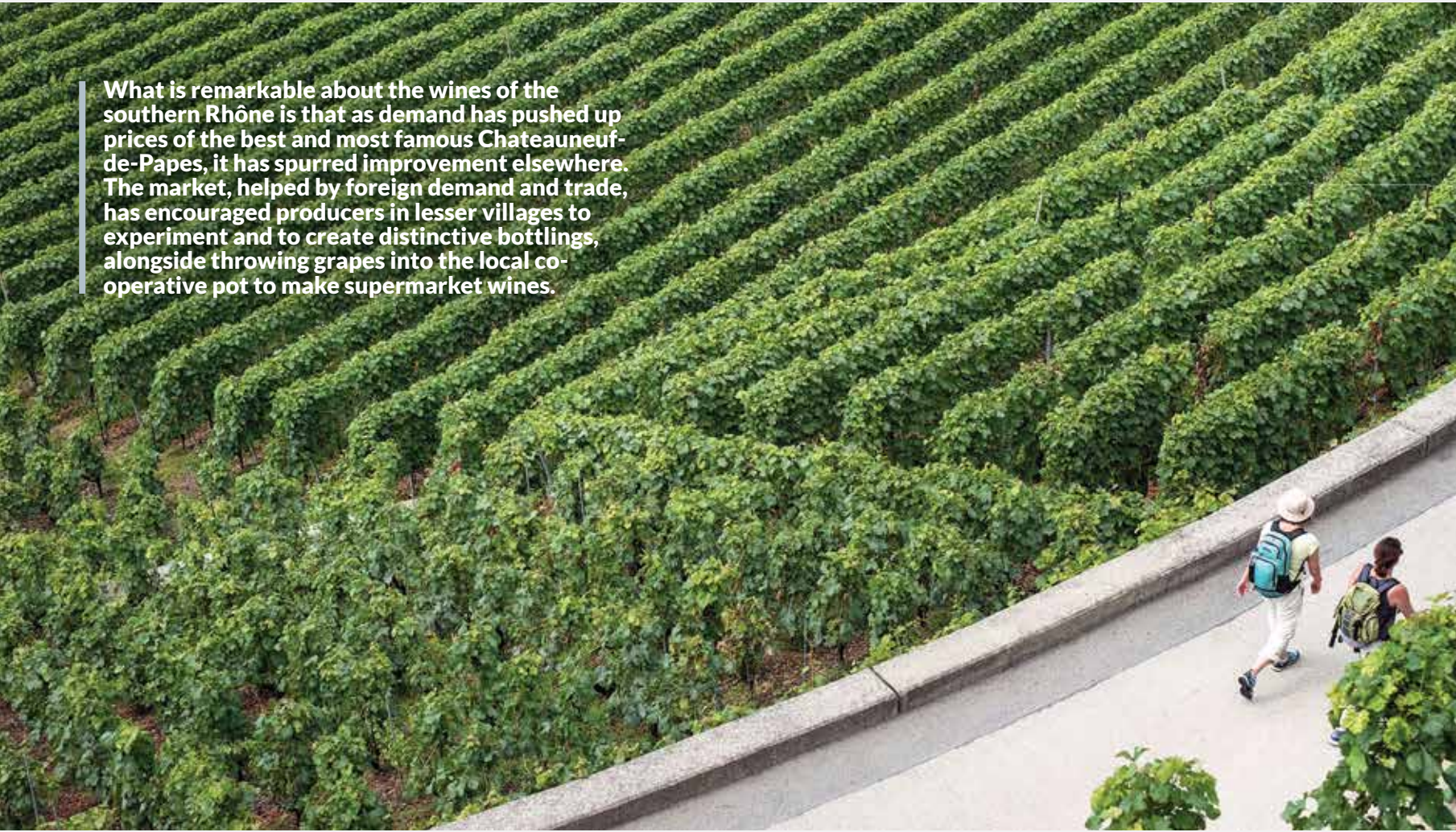
is a commentator on politics and finance. His latest book *Crash Bang Wallop: the inside story of London’s Big Bang and a financial revolution that changed the world* is published by Sceptre. He is based in London.

@iainmartin1

unions and the students take to the barricades trying to block him? Yes, they said.

As we listened, we drank some surprisingly enjoyable rosé, on the survivable side of toxic, that I had dreaded. It had been sold to our enthusiastic Scottish co-host by the litre and

What is remarkable about the wines of the southern Rhône is that as demand has pushed up prices of the best and most famous Châteauneuf-de-Papes, it has spurred improvement elsewhere. The market, helped by foreign demand and trade, has encouraged producers in lesser villages to experiment and to create distinctive bottlings, alongside throwing grapes into the local co-operative pot to make supermarket wines.



and defence properly, unlike modern Germany, and has a close relationship with the UK on that front. In addition, if the European Union post-Brexit is to integrate further, as its supporters want it to, then it should not be along exclusively German lines.

Macron is certainly trying to reinvest the idea of France with some grandeur, always a French obsession. The event

at Versailles earlier this summer where he announced, as expected, sweeping constitutional reform was quite something even by French standards. Is there another old and established democratic nation that takes such a shockingly cavalier approach to such matters? The head of state announced his regal plans to shrink the National Assembly by a third and talked pompously to

parliamentarians as though they are naughty children. It wouldn't happen in the UK or in the United States, or not without a coup.

The constitutional reform package is only, it is said, a means to an end, the end being the wholesale reform of the French economy. Macron hopes to unclog the blockages that inhibit entrepreneurialism, and to liberate the French economy with

supply-side reforms. The jobless rate is at its lowest level for five years, but at 9.5 per cent for the second quarter that's more than double UK unemployment.

Macron has his work cut out, but look carefully enough and you will see signs of hope in a country that for all its flawed labour laws has long excelled at design, aspects of manufacturing, infrastructure projects, and wine.

There are already optimists battling to build the new businesses France needs. Down the road from our friends in the Ardèche is Ruoms, a town with a centre best-avoided due to a plague of Dutch camping canoeists. We stayed on the outskirts for a few days at the Hotel Savel, which was bought last autumn by a young Swiss hotelier determined to turn a hotel rather down on its luck

into a model of good taste, simple luxury and friendly service. She is already well on the way to succeeding.

A large garden leads directly to the river where you can swim and dive off the gorge. On arrival at the unpretentious Hotel Savel ask for a large room on the first floor and a copy of the wine list. The wines of the Ardèche are not famed for their complexity or sophistication,



but those on offer here were excellent. Bone-dry rosé and a refined red, a pinot noir, were a steal – that is, reasonably-priced. This place is France at its best. Dinner at the Hotel Savel is served on the terrace in the summer and the cooking was as good as anything I have tasted in years.

Your wine columnist receives no discounts. I simply recommend this spot as a paying customer because it deserves to succeed, as does the bar and restaurant a few hundred yards down the road. L'Atelier is a proper micro-brewery in an art-deco

Charismatic leaders who promise too much, and become hooked on their own publicity, usually fail in the end, but point this out too early and it comes across as overly cynical. Give the boy a chance, is the response.

industrial space where you sit next to the production site and eat local produce.

More of this high quality, and fewer of the rip-off pizza places in Ruoms itself, and you can see how an area rather left behind could be reinvigorated by going up-market a notch and away from canoeing campers. What the best of gastropub cooking, and redesigned inns, have done for parts of rural England in recent decades can be replicated, it seems.

Several hours away, in a different price bracket, is

an outstanding place that needs no lessons from the British, or from anyone. L'Oustalet, a restaurant in the village of Gigondas, below the Dentelles de Montmirail, is expensive but worth every euro for the cooking and a fascinating wine list, full of hidden quirks, rare vintages and a large by-the-glass selection that changes from day to day. It now has a wine shop and rooms attached.

What is remarkable about the wines of the southern Rhône is that as demand has pushed up prices of the best and most famous Chateauf-neuf-de-Papes, it has spurred improvement elsewhere. The market, helped by foreign demand and trade, has encouraged producers in lesser villages to experiment and to create distinctive bottlings, alongside throwing grapes into the local co-operative pot to make supermarket wines. Look out for full-flavoured wines from Carainne, blending Syrah (usually more associated with the northern Rhône) and the Grenache and Mourvèdre grapes used in the South. Although Beumes des Venise, near Gigondas, is known for its dessert wines, the smaller number of reds

made there are improving rapidly. Further north there is value and quality to be found increasingly in wines from Grignan.

You see, competition is healthy because it fuels innovation and improvement for the thirsty

consumer and the decent producer in search of profit, as the former banker and trainee moderniser Emanuel Macron would no doubt observe. But *bon courage* convincing a majority of French voters of the virtues of competition. 🐕



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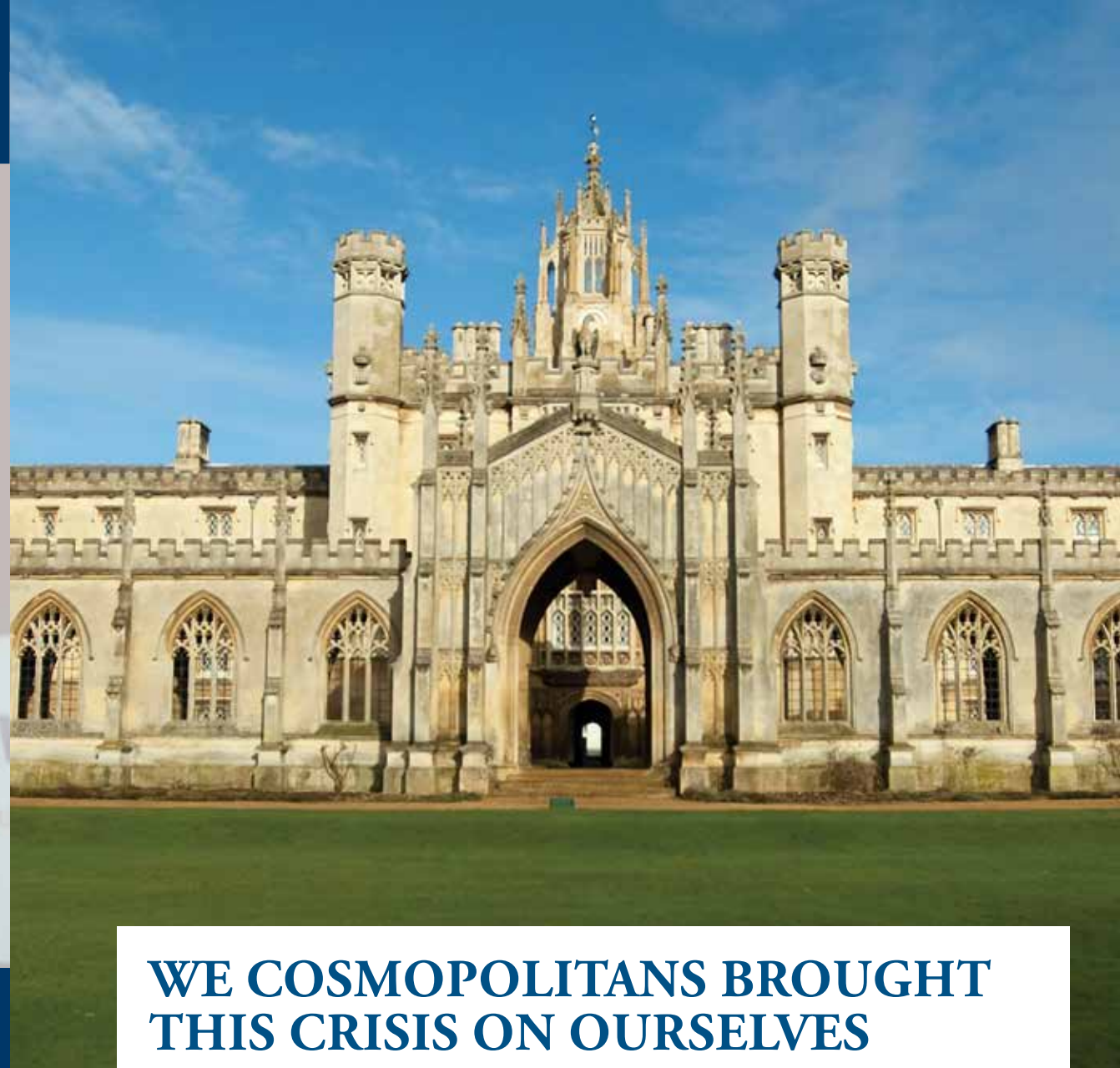
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WE COSMOPOLITANS BROUGHT THIS CRISIS ON OURSELVES

by David Goodhart

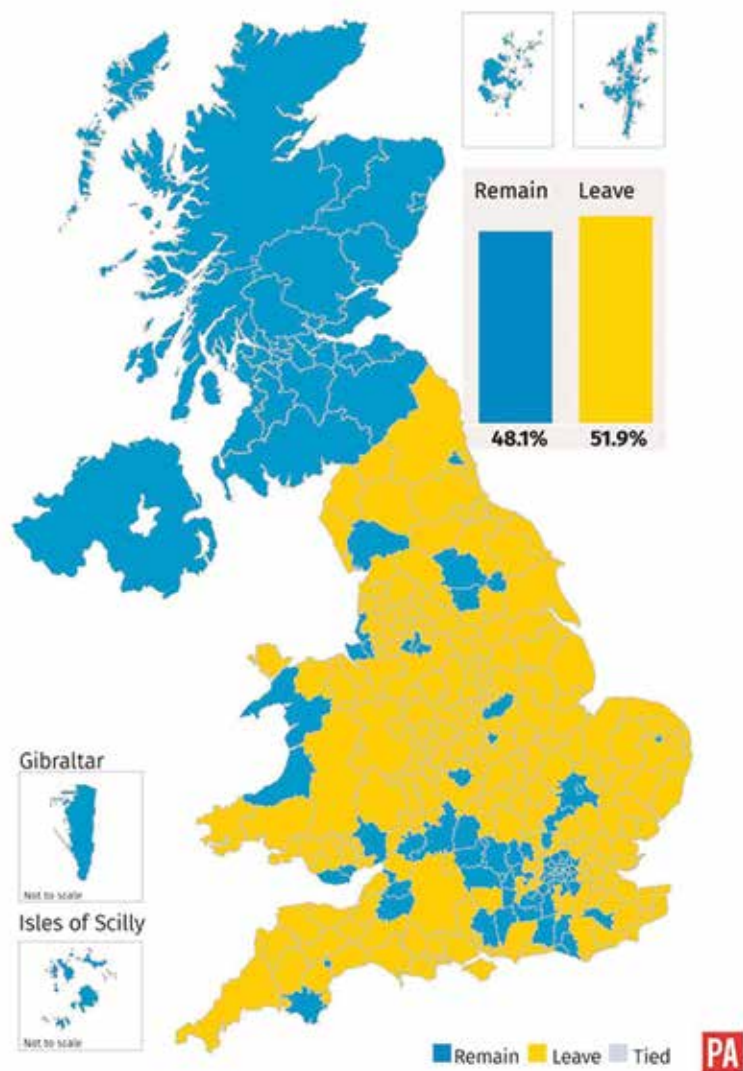
There are many things we Americans do *not* admire about you British, said the constitutional theorist Philip Bobbitt when I spoke to him on the fringes of the 2017 Engelsberg conference. “There is the food, the plumbing and the lack

of dental hygiene. But we have always had a sneaking admiration for the sensible way that you organise your politics.”

“Now,” he said, banging the table, “you seem to have gone even more crazy than us!”

Now, the majority of jobs in Britain either require a university degree or virtually no training at all.

He has a point. But I think I can explain one of the main sources of this new political instability, some of which applies to the United States and continental Europe and indeed all rich democracies.



A minority group of the highly educated and mobile – call them the “Anywheres” – who tend to value autonomy and openness, and comfortably surf social change, have recently come to dominate our economy and society.

A larger but much less influential group – the “Somewheres” – who

are more rooted and less well-educated, who value security and familiarity, and are more connected to group identities than the Anywheres, feel uncomfortable about this. Somewheres, who have felt excluded from the public space, have responded by using their power as voters to choose Brexit (and Trump too).

The values story is, of course, more complex than that, with many varieties of Anywheres and Somewheres and a large group of “In-betweeners”. And, of course, both worldviews are perfectly decent and legitimate, at least in their mainstream versions.

But what is undeniable is that the modern world in Britain and other rich democracies has been designed by and for the Anywheres – the knowledge economy and the centrality of cognitive ability to modern achievement, the expansion of higher education and relative neglect of technical and vocational learning, the rapid social change represented by mass immigration and a more open economy, and the decline of the family and more stable communities. This has produced a backlash that we call populism. And finding a new settlement between Anywheres and Somewheres is now the central task of modern politics.

This value divide is hardly new, so why has it become so central to politics in the past generation or so? There are two reasons. The first is that traditional socio-economic politics – meaning class-based, Left-Right arguments about the

size of the state and scale of redistribution – has recently been eclipsed in much of the rich world by socio-cultural politics, the “security and identity” issues that are themselves a response to the much greater economic and cultural openness and fluidity of our societies.

The second reason is the simple growth of Anywhere numbers, thanks in turn to the expansion of higher education. On my calculations, extrapolating from the British Social Attitudes Surveys, Anywheres now constitute

The unselfconscious way in which a cabinet minister doubts whether it is possible to lead a fulfilled life in a town of 120,000 people reveals something topsy-turvy about modern Britain.

about 25 per cent of British society; the Somewhere worldview still accounts for about half of the population. Back in 1960, British common sense was Somewhere common sense; today it is Anywhere common sense, at least in the public realm.

This divide is somewhat more acute in Britain than in America or continental Europe because almost all British students, whatever their social background, leave home and go to residential universities at the age of 18 and then sometimes move on to live in our over-mighty capital city that sucks in a large proportion of the upper professional class. A life of professional achievement in Britain is invariably a mobile one, and too often a London one. Graduates



of good universities are very unlikely to return to live in the town of their birth or have close friends who are non-graduates.

This cultural gulf helps to explain why the referendum result was such a surprise – about 3 million Somewheres who had stopped voting in general elections “because the parties are all the same to us” – turned up to vote for Brexit.

The mutual incomprehension also explains why the result provoked such an outbreak of Anywhere contempt towards those who voted Brexit.

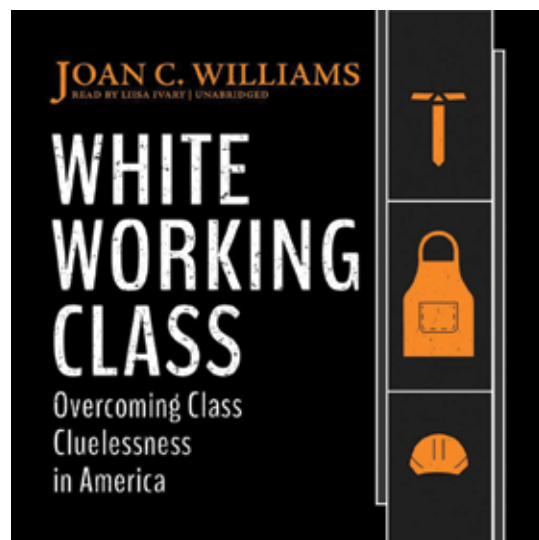
If this divide got us into a Brexit-shaped mess, surely the UK’s general election on June 8, 2017, has

turned the clock back to a more traditional politics?

No. The UK election, like Emmanuel Macron’s victory in France, was in part an Anywhere fight-back, with young, pro-EU graduates and other hardline opponents of Brexit helping to give Jeremy Corbyn, the Leftist Labour leader, an unexpectedly strong showing which denied Prime Minister Theresa May the

big majority she was hoping for to begin the Brexit negotiations.

It’s true that Corbyn also increased Labour’s share of the working-class vote from 34 per cent to 42 per cent, but reinforcing just how much the old, Left-Right class analysis has broken down, the Conservatives increased their share even more – from 32 to 44 per



cent. And both parties had Left-of-centre manifestos, rather critical of business, underlining that recent years have seen a convergence between classes and value groups on economic issues and a divergence on those “security and identity” cultural issues.

The election also illustrated the political and cultural power of Anywhere-dominated higher

education. Until recently, when people talked about university seats they meant Oxford and Cambridge. Now university students, staff and graduates who have stayed in the area, can swing the result in almost 15 per cent of the roughly 650 parliamentary seats – places like Bristol West, York, Manchester Wythenshawe, Canterbury and Brighton.

Political fatigue with the continuing squeeze on public spending did also play some role in the election. But today’s arguments are not mainly about class or even about inequality, the two explanations outsiders tend to reach for when trying to understand the

UK. Rising incomes can help to dilute the value divide, so the recent stagnation of incomes in the UK and elsewhere may have exacerbated it. But levels of inequality have not changed much since the late 1980s, and while the Anywhere/Somewhere distinction overlaps with class, it is more about education, mobility and degree of comfort with the modern world.

Underlying so many of the changes that have made life more uncomfortable for many Somewheres in recent decades is one bigger change: the elevation of educational qualifications and cognitive ability into the gold standard of social esteem and, linked to that, the declining status of most forms of non-graduate employment.

Only a couple of generations ago, a large number of people performed skilled jobs that required little cognitive ability but required a lot of experience to do well and thus protected the

If we cannot find a new settlement that makes more space for the decent populist Somewhere worldview, we will only strengthen the hand of the indecent populists.

status of those doing them. And those middling, often manufacturing, jobs also offered achievable incremental progression. Now, the majority of jobs in Britain either require a university degree or virtually no training at all.

And thanks to residential universities and the dominance of London, cognitive

ability and social achievement are associated with leaving – separating oneself from one’s roots. Today, about three in five Britons still live within 20 miles of where they lived when aged 14 – but few of those people are graduates of elite universities. And there is a growing divergence within the graduate population itself between those at more and less prestigious institutions. Russell Group university students are more likely to have the full Anywhere experience, travelling long distances from home and being surrounded by many

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international students. Students at former polytechnics travel shorter distances and might even still live at home, and such universities are now less likely to have many overseas students.

Social mobility is the mantra of all political parties, yet the main tool to achieve it has been expanding higher education, disproportionately benefiting the middle class and southern England – London and the South East account for nearly 70 per cent of the UK's top 20 per cent of socially mobile areas, while Yorkshire and Humberside, the North East and the West Midlands between them account for none. We have created in recent decades what feels like a hereditary meritocracy.

Everyone is in favour of getting the best-qualified people into the right jobs, and most people want bright people from whatever background to travel as far as their talents will take them. Yet there is only so much room at Oxbridge or in the top professions and, in any case, it presents a very narrow vision of what a good and successful life entails.

Should it not be possible to lead such a life in, for instance, the former steel

town of Rotherham in south Yorkshire? Justine Greening, the secretary of state for education, is doubtful. In a March 2017 speech about social mobility, she said: "I just had a flashback to all the years I spent growing up in Rotherham where I was aiming for something better – many of the things we have been talking about: a better job, owning my own home, an interesting career, a life that I found really

Political leaders need to reflect better the "change is loss" sentiments of many of their voters. Those Somewhere voters also need to feel that their priorities are heard. That is happening spontaneously, and often in an ugly way, through social media.

challenging... I knew there was something better out there." I'm sure I would have wanted to leave Rotherham too when I was young. But the unselfconscious way in which a cabinet minister doubts whether it is possible to lead a fulfilled life in a town of 120,000 people reveals something topsy-turvy about modern Britain.

There can also be social virtue in staying put,

indeed the contribution to the cohesion of neighbourhoods of people staying loyal to a place should be acknowledged more by local councils. One friend told me the sad story of a neighbour of his in east London who is in his late 60s and still lives in the house where he was born. He used to be known as the local "sheriff" because he knew everyone, and was a conduit for all the local gossip, in his ethnically mixed street. But now, with the pace of population churn becoming much faster, many residents don't know him or know that it is "his" street.

As Joan Williams pointed out in her book, *White Working Class: overcoming class cluelessness in America*: "For many perfectly able working class people their dream is not to join the upper middle class with its different culture but to stay true to their own values in their own communities, just with more money."

There are plenty of middle-class and working-class Somewheres who are nostalgic for a time when ordinary, middling, local lives seemed to enjoy more respect from the national culture and the dominant classes. Almost two-thirds of British adults now agree with this rather

leading statement: "Britain has changed in recent years beyond recognition, it sometimes feels like a foreign country and this makes me feel uncomfortable." Older people, the least well-educated and the least affluent are most likely to assent, but there is quite widespread support from other groups too.

So this is, surely, the new "third way" of our times: how to achieve an open, mobile society – and elite – while continuing to value meaningful (in other words, stable) communities? How

to encourage success and upward mobility without casting a shadow of failure over those who do not (or cannot) move up and out?

So how should liberal Anywheres respond to this great divide? It is uncomfortable to accept that much of current politics is a reaction against the over-dominance of your own side. But I believe an emotionally intelligent liberalism should see the two recent protest votes – for Brexit and Trump – as a legitimate appeal for a new settlement between these

two dominant worldviews.

Most Somewheres are "decent populists" who have accepted much of the great liberalisation in recent decades on race, gender and sexuality but still feel that the new openness of our societies – the mass immigration, the dilution of national social contracts, the rise and rise of the graduate class – does not work well for them.

We need a better form of openness that works for Somewheres as well as Anywheres. And if we cannot find a new settlement



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that makes more space for the decent populist Somewhere worldview, we will only strengthen the hand of the indecent populists. The new settlement is not about a lurch into illiberalism or about taking revenge on Anywheres, it is about finding ways of redistributing status and social honour as much as money.

The final chapter of my book, *The Road to Somewhere*, explores some of the possible policy options that might nudge politics towards a better balance between Anywhere and Somewhere interests. I look at this under the headings “Voice”, “The National” and “Society”.

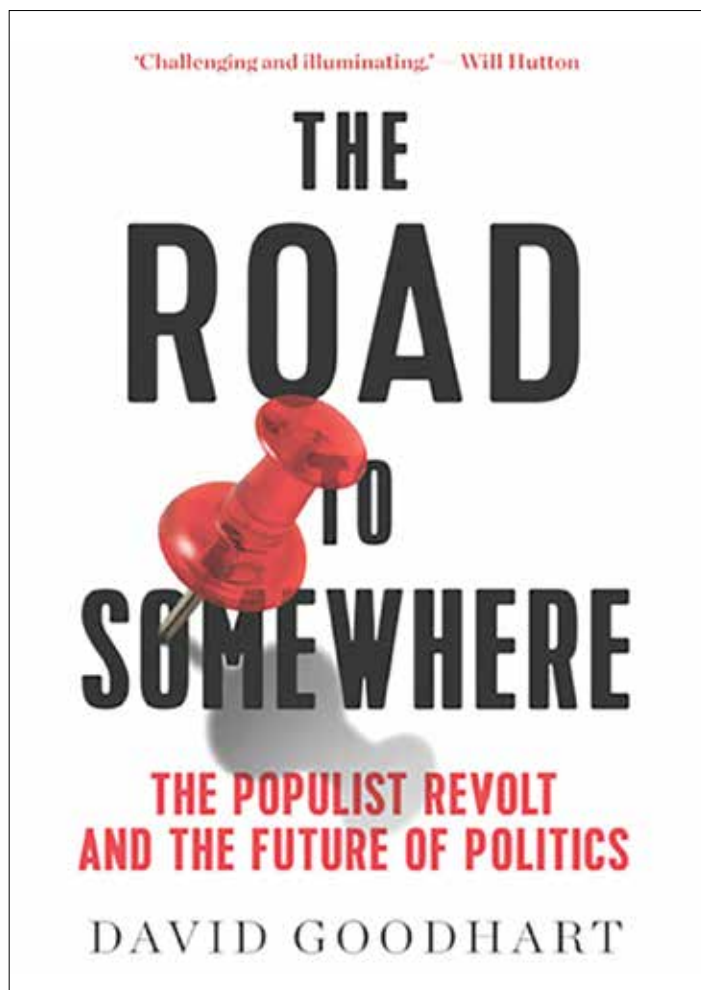
On Voice, I argue that political rhetoric matters, and too much of it in recent decades has been dominated by an Anywhere celebration of change. Political leaders need to reflect better the “change is loss” sentiments of many of their voters. Those Somewhere voters also need to feel that their priorities are heard. That is happening spontaneously, and often in an ugly way, through social media. In mainstream politics, localism and maybe compulsory voting would help to focus politicians’ attention more on Somewhere interests.

The National is about the restoration of national social contracts in labour markets and elsewhere, a restoration of the “fellow citizen favouritism” that most Somewheres think is still a central purpose of the modern state. Policies include returning to moderate levels of immigration, ID cards to reassure people in more socially fluid times that their social rights are protected and a greater

sense that public assets belong to citizens.

Finally, the Social category is about rebalancing educational priorities away from the relentless focus on higher education, and also about more layered and subtle thinking on social mobility which has been too focused on the “all or nothing” journey to a good university.

Where does the Anywhere/Somewhere settlement



An emotionally intelligent Anywhere politics must be able to combine individual liberty and minority rights on the one hand, and a strong sense of belonging and group attachment on the other.

currently work best? Smaller European countries like Ireland or Denmark have preserved a national intimacy that prevents Anywheres pulling away too far. Scotland under the SNP, too, perhaps deserves credit for its attempt at a new Anywhere/Somewhere settlement north of the border within the framework of moderate Scottish nationalism.

But it is Germany that seems to have reached a better balance than most big developed countries. (Austria and Switzerland are similar, though much smaller.) There is no London, nor global universities to upset the balance, and a much greater focus on the middling and the local. There is also an institutionalised voice for employees in business and the three-year apprenticeship system continues to confer respect on even basic jobs in retail. The *Länder* system gives many people a strong

regional identity and even a local dialect to go with it.

It is true that German Anywheres, in politics and the media, remain wary of normal national feeling and tend towards post-national political correctness, as we saw in the 2015 refugee crisis. But there is one part of Germany that has partially insulated itself from this trend – conservative, Catholic Bavaria is perhaps the place that gets it most right in all of Europe with its combination of social conservatism and economic dynamism. It has been said that Anywheres regard society as a shop, while Somewheres see it as a home. Bavaria is a home with some very good shops.

Finally, I have often been asked in the past few months whether my book is about saving or burying liberalism. I usually answer neither, but I do wish liberalism would practise what it preaches on pluralism by not imposing Anywhere priorities on Somewheres who have different ones. An emotionally intelligent Anywhere politics must be able to combine individual liberty and minority rights on the one hand, and a strong sense of belonging and group attachment on the other.

The American sociologist Daniel Bell used to say that he was a social democrat in economics, a liberal in politics, and on social and cultural matters somewhat conservative. This is the “hidden majority” that remains unspoken for in developed democracies. It is my hope that the recent value conflicts represented by Brexit and Trump, and the current political stalemate in Britain and elsewhere, are stations on the way to that majority finding a voice. 🐶



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ITALIANS ALWAYS VOTE FOR REVENGE

by Daniele Capezzone

The traditional political parties and the mainstream media in Italy often label their enemies and opponents as “populists” or “extremists”, pointing out their lack of competence, experience and credibility.

And, in a way, they are right. The main anti-establishment force, the Five Star Movement, for example, has been extremely clever at making the most of the popular anger against the old political system. But on the other hand, in Rome and in some other local governments, the

Five Star boys and girls are proving to be dramatically incompetent. If your job is to scream, being a total amateur is an asset: but once you have been voted in to make decisions, it turns out to be a liability.

Nevertheless, if I may offer you a different point of view, a different angle, the best unconscious allies of the so-called “populists” are the establishment forces themselves. The Italian elites (starting with the old parties) should be questioned about why they have failed so spectacularly

The Five Star Movement’s real intentions are unpredictable.

– and for decades – against the real Italian political and economic cancers: high taxes, high public spending, and the third-largest sovereign debt in the world. Answering that question is much more difficult than criticising “populists”.

Look at the big picture. Even in Italy, media and political elites (the same bigwigs who haven’t understood Brexit and Trump) suffer from a sort of detachment from reality. Last year,

in December, even the Italian electors voted to smash the establishment and the *status quo*. On Renzi’s side (at the time, he was Prime Minister) you could find public and private television channels, major papers and mainstream media, big corporations, vested interests. In spite of this huge support and of constant scare tactics, Renzi’s proposal was literally wiped out.

The real point that the establishment fails to consider is an immense middle-class (and lower middle-class) whose living standards have been stagnating for years. They may have kept their jobs: but, in spite of that, they feel poorer and less secure. What is more, they have been kept out of the official agenda, of the public conversation: their fears and worries have been rejected and brushed aside for years.

So, at night, angry as they are, turning on their TVs, they are forced to watch the political class (and so-called experts) talking over electoral laws and constitutional details. That’s why, when they are allowed to vote (not so often, in Italy), every election becomes the instrument of their revenge.

Renzi made a giant mistake. When he took over, in 2014, he looked like a fresh

guy, a disruptor of the old political schemes. And he was lucky enough to enjoy three “magic” mega-trends: the QE from the ECB, a 50 per cent crash in oil prices, and a devaluation of the Euro. Instead of making the most of them to boost the economy, and instead of focusing on a shock tax cut, a shock spending cut, and a shock sovereign debt cut with a proper privatisation plan, he decided to waste three years on the institutional architec-

Nevertheless, if I may offer you a different point of view, a different angle, the best unconscious allies of the so-called “populists” are the establishment forces themselves.

ture (transforming the Senate, etc). Last December, the electors had their final say on this political choice.

For years, similar mistakes have been made by traditional Centre-Right governments and by technical “juntas” (Mr Monti’s cabinet, for example). Every party, every coalition, every leader may have had reasons and explanations (the Italian political environment is never easy to live in) and they could sincerely argue that they have done their best. Nevertheless, no one has been able to cut

taxes, public spending and sovereign debt.

Sooner or later (perhaps, after the next general election, scheduled next year, in spring), Italy will have to come to terms with reality, and it will be no picnic, whoever wins. As I wrote before, the third-largest sovereign debt in the world, more than 2,200 billion euros; every year, we must issue bonds for at least 400 billion euros; every year we spend 70 billion euros in interest; and, should the interest rates rise, the bill would become even more expensive.

Add that some major banks are on the verge of crisis, in a stagnating economic environment, and that these banks have a huge portfolio of sovereign debt: it’s not difficult to put two and two together and understand that an eventual crisis would naturally become a “systemic threat”. So, all of the existing political forces are at a crossroads.

The traditional Centre-Left (Gentiloni’s cabinet, and Renzi as the current leader of the Democratic Party) is losing ground. The Five Star Movement’s real intentions are unpredictable. So, another interesting question on the carpet is the future of the Italian Centre-Right, in this tripolar political system. We, as

A great part of the Italian electorate is looking forward to listening not only to a criticism of the EU, but also to a positive and constructive platform.

Direzione Italia (a pro-market “start-up” in the Italian Centre-Right) call for a clear reforming platform starting from the economy and for primary elections to trigger a vibrant competition of ideas and solutions.

We should learn from the Brexit experience. Of course, we cannot afford a sort of leap in the dark, in Italy. Our country is not in the same position as the United Kingdom, unfortunately: we are not the fourth military global power, we are not the fifth economy in the world, and we are overwhelmed by our

sovereign debt, so we have to pay serious attention.

But the time has come to outline different scenarios, to have a coping strategy. No one can honestly take for granted that what has not worked so far will be working in the future.

And (that should be the main “British lesson” to learn, in my opinion) we should offer a constructive proposal to this mass of disappointed and disaffected electors. Instead of judging them, we should offer them something better. Both traditional forces and anti-establishment movements should use these months before the official kick-off of the electoral campaign to find something new in order to channel all this social anger.

As far as I’m concerned, the Brexit negotiations could provide an opportunity: Italy

should be part of an alliance to trigger a serious renegotiation process also in Continental Europe, helping reforming forces to work together against the European existing *status quo*, and against the perspective of a “Franco-German” (or Germanofrench) superstate, designed in Berlin-Paris-Brussels, and then imposed to all of the others, from Finland to Portugal.

A great part of the Italian electorate is looking forward to listening not only to a criticism of the EU, but also to a positive and constructive platform. It would be essential that rational and reforming movements and personalities should promote this kind of public conversation. And a consequent political challenge. 🐕



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FASHIONING THE FUTURE

by Kristian Niemietz



As the unravelling of Venezuela’s socialist experiment continues, anti-government protests are picking up momentum. Street protests have long been a feature of Venezuelan politics, but according to Project Syndicate, the opposition movement is not just growing in size, but also becoming more broad-based and socio-economically diverse.

Is this the beginning of the end of yet another failed socialist experiment? Venezuela is fast descending into authoritarianism, but it is still technically a democracy. If an early presidential election forced Nicolas Maduro out of office, the descent could still be halted.

It normally takes ages for a country to recover from socialism. East Germany, for example, is still heavily dependent on fiscal transfers from West Germany. But Venezuela still has a rudimentary market economy, waiting to be reactivated. If a post-socialist government ended the disastrous regime of price controls and exchange rate controls, the runaway money printing, and the arbitrary

“Political ideas lead a life of their own, and whether they are fashionable or not has little to do with whether they are successful or not.”

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confiscations, the country could bounce back relatively quickly. Rebuilding investors’ trust and getting the public finances back in order, however, would take years.

But it might positively affect the debate in many

Western countries, where socialist ideas have become extremely fashionable again, especially among the young. Political ideas lead a life of their own, and whether they are fashionable or not has little to do with whether they are successful or not. But it should cause socialists at least some embarrassment if a real-world model which they have been praising to the skies for years collapses so spectacularly. And until about three years ago, Owen Jones, Jeremy Corbyn, Seumas Milne, Diane Abbott and many other leading figures of the British Left had been doing precisely that in the case of Venezuela.

Remember the “Schulz-Hype”, the brief surge of Germany’s Social Democrats (SPD) in the polls after nominating Martin Schulz as their top candidate? It now turns out that it was just a short-term fluke. The SPD was hammered at the federal election on September 24th, securing just 25.7 percent of the vote.

If you are interested in a smooth and successful Brexit, this is good news. It is not exactly a secret that there



But there could still be substantial gains in a number of sectors. If trade talks take longer than expected, maybe the UK government should consider building on what is already there, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. Why shouldn't the UK just join the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), turning it into a transatlantic free trade area?

Meanwhile in France Emmanuel Macron has not been off to a bad start. Plans to limit redundancy payments, and make it easier for companies to lay off staff for economic reasons, are being drafted. So are changes to the pension formula, which would end the expensive privileges enjoyed by some groups, and strengthen the link between entitlements and contributions. If enacted, Macron's plans would facilitate job creation, and make the cost of the pension system a bit more manageable.

So far, so good. But we need to bear in mind that similar reforms have been tried before, namely by Alain Juppé in the 1990s, and Nicolas Sarkozy in the 2000s. They quickly U-turned in the face of strikes and resistance.

Most free-marketeters would naturally be a bit suspicious about an institution

are people in Brussels who want to "punish" the UK, in order to set a warning example to potential future defectors. Hans-Olaf Henkel, a German MEP, has recently accused the EU's chief Brexit negotiator and the European Parliament's Brexit co-ordinator of deliberate, politically motivated obstructionism. A Chancellor Schulz would have reinforced that tendency. A conservative-liberal coalition with a strong FDP, in contrast, can be expected to take a much more constructive line on Brexit, focused on minimising disruption and preserving trade links.

Speaking of post-Brexit trading relationships: a US/UK working group, tasked with preparing a free trade deal between the two countries, has been formally

Why shouldn't the UK just join the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), turning it into a transatlantic free trade area?

established. The UK is still a member of the European Customs Union, and therefore not allowed to engage in trade talks on its own. But such "talks about talks" could already do a lot of the heavy lifting, so that the conclusion of a trade deal after Brexit need not take ages (provided we don't ruin it by panicking over chlorinated chickens or some such non-issue).

The US is the UK's second-most important trading partner after Germany. This means that the gains from a free trade deal will not be massive overall, since the level of economic integration is already fairly high.



It is not exactly a secret that there are people in Brussels who want to "punish" the UK, in order to set a warning example to potential future defectors. Hans-Olaf Henkel, a German MEP, has recently accused the EU's chief Brexit negotiator and the European Parliament's Brexit co-ordinator of deliberate, politically motivated obstructionism.

has expressed a commitment to further privatisations.

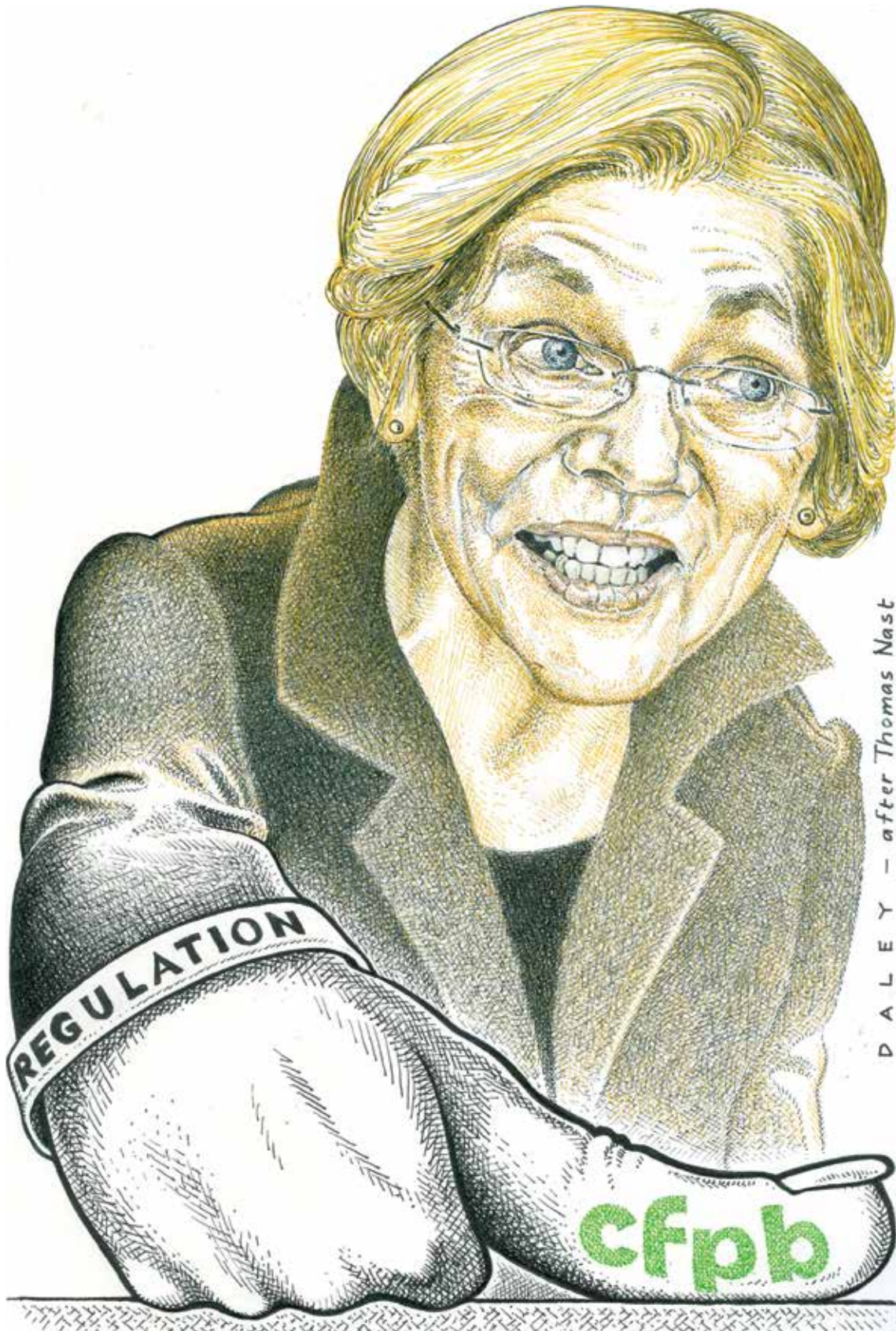
By African standards, Nigeria has been a magnet for foreign direct investment for years. There has recently been a slowdown in investment flows, and what better way to revive it than a privatisation initiative?

India, in contrast, tends to be a much more reluctant

privatiser, but the recently announced plan to privatise Air India is an encouraging sign. Privatisation helped British Airways, Air France and Lufthansa successfully to defend their positions despite fierce competition from low-cost airlines. It is about time the ailing Air India company joined that club. 🐶

that has the words "National Council" in its name. But it is worth making an exception for Nigeria's "National Council for Privatisation". That council, set up by the previous government and continued by the current one, has recently privatised a large petrochemical company, and the government





CONSERVATIVES SHOULD CHANNEL PEOPLE'S ANGER

by Ben Johnson

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

The original Populists described themselves as “the plain people” fighting dark, malevolent forces seeking to “own the people”. However, their target was not the unaccountable power of absolute monarchy, but corporations. And their solution was not constitutionally limited government. Instead, their platform stated “that the power of government – in other words, of the people – should be expanded... as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that

oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land”. To that end they demanded a graduated income tax, nationalisation of unpopular industries like banks, increased federal regulation of others, and an inflationary monetary system to water down their debts.

The platform was written in part by Ignatius Donnelly, who wrote extensive (to his mind) non-fiction about the history of Atlantis. Some 125 years later, while everyone has discarded Donnelly’s geographical musings, politicians continue to repeat his equally discredited economic and political prescriptions. The popularity of Bernie Sanders and the Democratic Party’s sentimental leader, Elizabeth Warren, shows the extent to which the party is captivated by Left-wing populism.

Warren pledged allegiance to populism before the Campaign for America’s Future in 2014. “I’m told you’ve spent much of the day talking about populism – about the power of the people to make change in this country,” she

Preferred labour unions and influential industries get guaranteed government loans or bailouts. This, in turn, sparks another populist revolt, demanding a new round of government regulations, starting the cycle afresh.

told conference attendees. “This is something I believe in deeply.” As an example of a grassroots policy, she touted her role in creating the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Her choice was unintentionally revelatory.

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



Left's policies: imperious, centralised, undemocratic cronyism.

The CFPB reveals a central fact of populism: policies enacted to establish control by the government – in the name of “the people,” as Donnelly insisted – end up moving real decision-making ever further from the reach of the average citizen. One individual may exert definitive influence at a school board meeting, slightly less sway with a state legislator, and virtually none over the president. But a CFPB that cannot be influenced by

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

two of the three branches of government could hardly be less democratic. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Warren exhorts her fellow Democrats

to focus on regulation instead of taxation in her new book, *This Fight is Our Fight*.

As policy ascends the rungs of government, it becomes more swayed by the very corporate titans it was intended to rein in. Thus, the industry codes drawn up during the first widespread attempt at national regulation, the New Deal, were written by the largest – and most politically connected – corporations, and ruthlessly enforced to put their competitors out of business. “The teachings of experience” tell us these policies disfranchise

the consumer, who had been able to vote with his dollars, and empower politicians influenced by political contributions. Today's populist Left promotes centralisation and then wonders aloud about “regulatory capture.”

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

of ‘humanity’, ‘the people’, ‘the race’, ‘the future’, ‘God’, ‘destiny’, and so on.”

Further, government patronage inevitably breeds contempt for its recipients among the ruling elites allegedly representing their interests. Senator Huey “Kingfish” Long of Louisiana, who likely would have run for president had he not been assassinated in 1935, used state largesse to corral independent-minded state legislators. After a meeting in which one lawmaker accepted graft in exchange voting against his constituents' views, Long

rebuffed his handshake. “I paid for you,” Long told the elected official. “I don't have to shake your hand.” Multiply the amount of largesse by a correlative level of contempt, and the result is Venezuela, where another election has been stolen and the government shoots citizens down in the streets, in the name of the people.

In the US context, in time government regulations devolve into naked favouritism. Preferred labour unions and influential industries get guaranteed government loans or bailouts. This, in

turn, sparks another populist revolt, demanding a new round of government regulations, starting the cycle afresh.

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

In her speech, Warren complained that “big

EU Structural and Cohesion Funds “have become the largest source of corruption in Central and Eastern Europe”, according to the Slovakian MEP Richard Sulik.

banks... got bailed out” under the Bush administration. Conservatives also oppose bank bailouts, albeit from altogether different premises. We believe the government should not be

in the business of bailing out failing businesses, that federal handouts encourage cronyism, and that the surest way to break the power of the regnant corporate-government-academic nexus is to strip the bureaucracy of its excess money and power.

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

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



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European conservatives battle an insular elite, largely based in Brussels. EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

“have become the largest source of corruption in Central and Eastern Europe”, according to the Slovakian MEP Richard Sulik. And while conservative principles demand prudent execution, a truly conservative government would be dramatically smaller (and less costly) than the lumbering behemoths stretching from Lisbon to Helsinki.

Conservatism is prepared to offer a compelling counter-narrative and proven solutions to these problems. Left-wing populism merely deepens them in its self-perpetuating cycle of

centralisation. Like Atlantis, the economic planks of populism should be reclassified as mythology. 🐕



The Reverend Ben Johnson is a senior editor overseeing transatlantic issues at the Acton Institute’s Religion & Liberty Transatlantic. A former radio presenter, he is also an Eastern Orthodox priest. [@TheRightsWriter](#)





WE NEED A CONSERVATIVE POPULISM

by Alvino-Mario Fantini

Last year's Brexit vote in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the US have been described as demonstrating "the return of populism". The emergence over the years of other Western political leaders such as Hugo

Chávez in Venezuela, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, and Beppe Grillo in Italy has also been seen as part of this phenomenon. Even in the East, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Japan's Shinzo Abe, and Narendra Modi in India all seem to

have been cast from a similar mould.

Although these politicians are as ideologically diverse as can be, they are all considered "populists". This is confusing – and raises important questions about the very meaning and usefulness of the term.

One might even argue that the *only* thing certain is that the term "populism" is used loosely and inconsistently.

It's worth recalling that the term "populism" is of a rather recent vintage. Merriam-Webster's dictionary informs us that its first known use was in 1891, when it was

used to describe certain political movements in the US. Those movements, according to a retrospective in *The Week*, were motivated by the belief that "the will of ordinary citizens should prevail over that of a privileged elite."

The populist movements of today share this same

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

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

If we were to believe what policymakers, the media, and the *bien pensants* tell us, we would have to consider all of today's populist movements "dangerous" and a threat to democracies everywhere. The political scientist Jan-Werner Müller, from his own privileged perch at Princeton University, even suggests that

“exclusivity” and a “rejection of pluralism” lie at the very core of populism, subtly raising the spectre of authoritarianism. But nothing could be further from the case – unless one willingly ignores some salient facts.

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

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

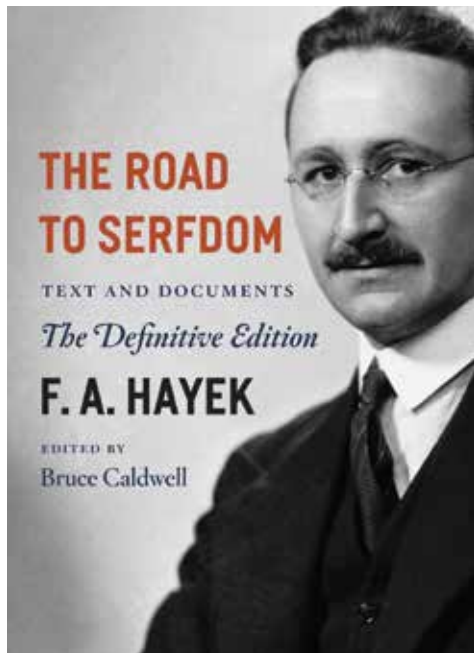
For example, despite what alarmists in Brussels, Washington, and the media



have averred, not all populist movements are “on the right”. Podemos in Spain, and the coalition of Greek parties known as Syriza are both considered populist, but they are on the far Left of

the political spectrum, advocating destructive policies that could very well put their respective societies firmly on what Hayek called the road to serfdom. The only thing they share with other, more benign populist movements is an opposition to corrupt, indifferent, and unaccountable elites.

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



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

identity, religious affiliation, and specific cultural rootedness”, in the words of Roger Kimball.

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

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

Despite what alarmists in Brussels, Washington, and the media have averred, not all populist movements are “on the right”. Podemos in Spain, and the coalition of Greek parties known as Syriza are both considered populist, but they are on the far Left of the political spectrum, advocating destructive policies

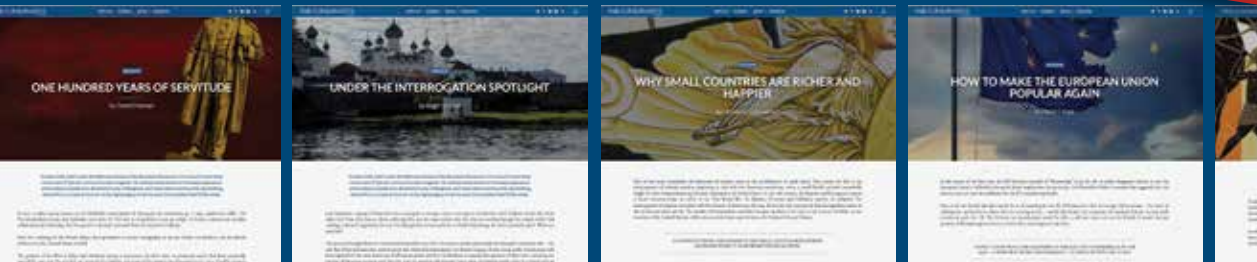
In the end, the *only* way forward is for those of us who believe in the Anglo-American tradition of “ordered liberty” to seek the success of a legitimate “conservative populism” – one that may dethrone the artificial oligarchies that rule over us (on both sides of the Atlantic) and which will help democratic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



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CONSERVATIVE BOOKS

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

- Jane Austen

by James Delingpole

In each issue, James Delingpole reviews a book which may not be recent in its publication, but which conservatives should read.



Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the best-loved romances in English literature. But this probably has more to do with the sundry glossy film and TV adaptations than it does with anything Austen wrote.

Reading the book now it's quite hard to put out of your mind scenes like the one in Andrew Davies's adaptation for the BBC, where Colin Firth as the hero Mr Darcy bursts out of a lake, a wet shirt clinging to his manly torso; or to think of heroine Elizabeth Bennet without remembering the poutingly pretty but woefully miscast Keira Knightley in the slushy 2005 movie version.

Yes, of course there is romance and even a degree of passion in Austen. But because these books were written in the early 1800s by a genteel spinster, any sexual undercurrents are quite

properly suppressed; when they do burst forth, it is most definitely not with the author's approval. When, for example, Elizabeth's flighty little sister Lydia runs off with the dashing army officer Wickham, it is a major disaster which brings shame on all involved.

What most concerns Austen, as she makes clear in her famous opening sentence – "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in a possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" – are the workings of a strict social order governed by class and money.

You can laugh at its absurdities – as Austen frequently does, with her cruel, brilliant and hilarious wit. But you can't escape its remorseless regimentation. If – like Elizabeth Bennet and her four sisters – you are born into an upper-middle-class family with no fortune

“ If – like Elizabeth Bennet and her four sisters – you are born into an upper-middle-class family with no fortune to inherit, then your only hope of a halfway-decent future is to marry someone rich.

James Delingpole

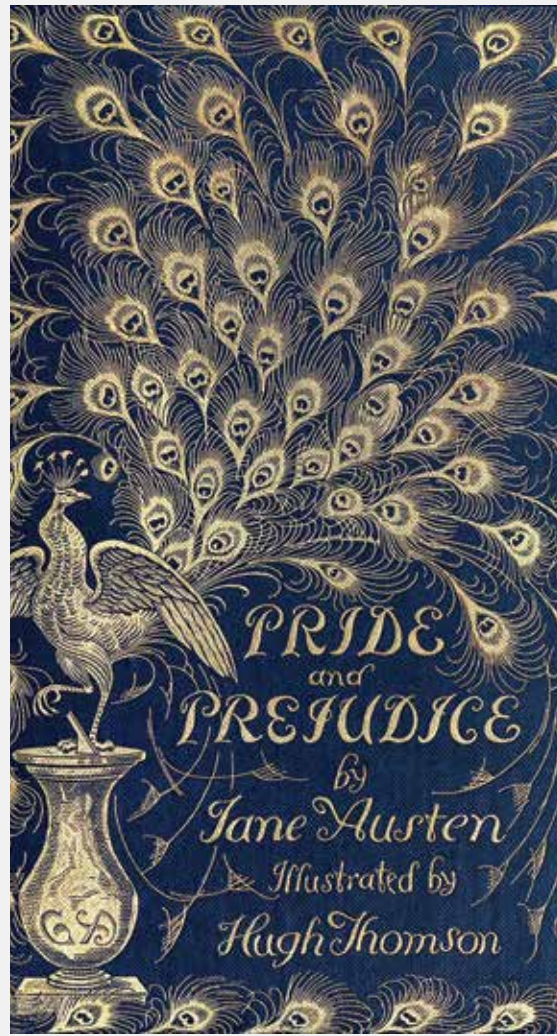
is a conservative columnist and novelist who has written for publications including the Daily Mail, Daily Express, The Times, The Daily Telegraph, and The Spectator. He is also the executive editor of Breitbart London. His latest book is Watermelons.

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to inherit, then your only hope of a halfway-decent future is to marry someone rich. (As Austen didn't, by the way. It's what makes her books so poignant. They're a clever, talented, disappointed woman's wish-fulfilment fantasy).

This is the main attraction of her hero Mr Darcy. Sure, he is reasonably handsome and tolerably mannered, but his real appeal – as Austen keeps reminding us – is that he has an annual income of £10,000. In today's money, this is getting on for £1 million a year.

Also, of course, he has a really big one. A house, that is, called Pemberley, over which Austen drools at some length. Everything about Pemberley is perfect: the amiable, devoted housekeeper; the tasteful furnishings; the excellent trout-fishing for gentleman visitors; the special windows that open up right from



To modern readers these mercenary considerations might seem distasteful. But that's because we live in a less constrained age where women aren't so dependent on men for a comfortable life and where men, with a bit of hard work, luck or dishonesty, can start from scratch and end up with houses as big as Darcy's.

for a comfortable life and where men, with a bit of hard work, luck or dishonesty, can start from scratch and end up with houses as big as Darcy's.

In England in the 1800s such opportunities weren't really available. Today we love Jane for her empire line dresses, gentlemen in tight britches vaulting on to horses, stone-built

the floor; the various wooded prospects in the park. What makes these descriptions all the more wistful from our heroine Elizabeth's point of view is that they will never now be hers: thanks to her prejudiced misunderstanding of proud Mr Darcy, she has flatly rejected his earlier marriage offer and done herself out of a fortune.

To modern readers these mercenary considerations might seem distasteful. But that's because we live in a less constrained age where women aren't so dependent on men

rectories with cottage gardens, genteel sparring in the drawing room over cards, dashing officers at balls. But had we not been born rich we would have felt like prisoners, as most of Austen's characters effectively are.

Poor Charlotte Lucas. In the book, Elizabeth thinks the less of her best friend for marrying the ridiculous Mr Collins, the social-climbing vicar she herself has rejected. But this is unfair and typical of the pride and prejudice with which Austen has apportioned her complex, not wholly likeable heroine.

Charlotte is plain, 27 years old and her father a mere knight with an insufficient fortune: if she doesn't marry someone, anyone, soon, she is likely to end up an impoverished old maid.

Austen's way of dealing with all this social horror

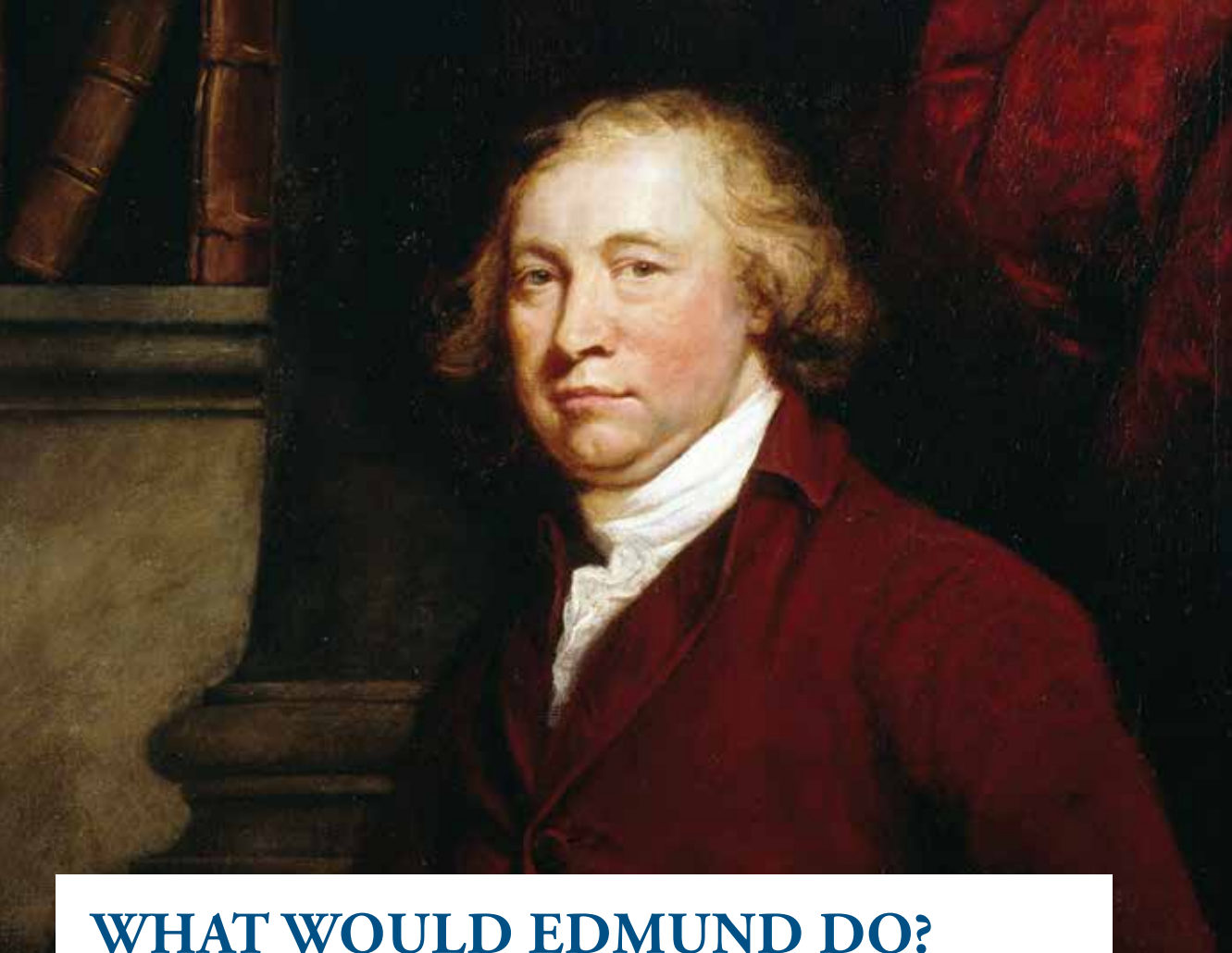


The genius of Jane Austen is that she also works quite brilliantly as she is often seen today: as a creator of feisty, sparky heroines, a sublime comedian and spinner of gloriously romantic yarns.

is to make light of it with her wit and her weapons-grade irony. The snobbish, bullying Lady Catherine de Bourgh is a monster but we can bear, just about, the wholly unearned social power that her money and station have granted her by having a jolly good titter with Elizabeth about how utterly frightful she is. In truth, though, it doesn't make her ability to tyrannise her social inferiors any less real.

The genius of Jane Austen is that she also works quite brilliantly as she is often seen today: as a creator of feisty, sparky heroines, a sublime comedian and spinner of gloriously romantic yarns. But read

her again – and re-read her, endlessly, as she deserves – and you'll be reminded that she is much cleverer, more ambiguous, and a lot tougher than a merely amusing writer of high-end chick-lit. 🐕



WHAT WOULD EDMUND DO?

by Danny Kruger

Like the Bible, the work of Edmund Burke is a source of authority for many divergent opinions; like the Bible, there is a deep and singular truth running through it all. Conor Cruise O'Brien, following Yeats, called it Burke's "great melody", which he defined as the fight against the abuse of power.

This explains Burke's battle against corruption in Parliament, his great campaigns on behalf of the natives of India, the Catholics of

Ireland and the rebellious colonists of America, and his episodic – and for the time, quixotic – defences of Jews, homosexuals, debtors and slaves.

It also explains his defence of property rights, the established church, the crown and the Whig aristocracy, "the great oaks which shade a kingdom". This is the Burke we now know best, the author of thundering philippics against equality, republicanism, and other political

abstractions that threaten to uproot the settled order.

Burke's defence of establishment was not, or not only, aesthetic and self-serving. The son of a small-time Irish attorney who grew up on the precarious edge of economic and political security, Burke was always conscious of how the little people suffered when big people turned the world upside down. Does this make him a Whig (which he was, formally) or a Tory (the tribe which has claimed

him ever since)? Of course he was both, playing a greater melody than either.

This wasn't always apparent at the time. Few people understood how he could support the American Revolution and oppose the French one; many – like Marx in the next century – thought him a hypocrite, motivated only by the interests of his Whig patrons. But his friends today can hear the melody. Liberals like Yeats and O'Brien – and his most recent (Conservative) biographer Jesse Norman – call it opposition to oppression. This conservative would say the singular theme of Burke's writings is defence of settlement, and of the particular settlement emerging through the "long 18th century" between the Glorious Revolution and the ascent of Queen Victoria.

This was the period in which Britain became the country we now know: a parliamentary, law-governed, industrial, tolerant, globally-engaged and united kingdom. In each of these developments Burke helped make the case for the modern order we have inherited. He did so in the face of forces of reaction, and he defeated these forces by framing his argument in ancient idiom, explaining the emergence and continuation of an order which he saw to be

latent in British history. What Marxist historians (describing this period) call the invention of tradition, Burke called reforming in order to conserve.

How, then, should modern Burkeans follow his lead? What would Edmund do? Something impractical, is the answer. Burke's own political career

The son of a small-time Irish attorney who grew up on the precarious edge of economic and political security, Burke was always conscious of how the little people suffered when big people turned the world upside down. Does this make him a Whig (which he was, formally) or a Tory (the tribe which has claimed him ever since)? Of course he was both, playing a greater melody than either.

was not successful, partly held back by his low birth, partly by his exuberant and vehement loquacity. His one direct responsibility during his party's brief period in government in the early 1780s was a vast diffuse reform of the vast diffuse corrupt patronage system of the Crown in Parliament; he

failed, as he did in his attempt to bring Warren Hastings to justice for his abuses as Governor-General of Bengal.

Rather than following Burke the politician, let us consider how we should apply his thinking. Beneath all the psycho-social, theological-philosophical, existential-apocalyptic questions of our time – our turbulent politics and the world-shaking effects of technology – is quite a simple question: what to do with the twisted hero of modernity, the autonomous self-determining individual?

As Jesse Norman shows, one of Burke's great contributions was to identify, and rebuke, the emergence of this figure in his own day, and to challenge "the idea that human wellbeing is just a matter of satisfying individual wants". More than anyone before or since, Burke framed individual fulfilment in terms of social membership – not the coercive membership of the totalitarian state but the membership, both given and chosen, of an organic community.

More immediately Burke has much to say to our present discontents. There is in each generation a battle for the soul of conservatism, which reflects the two sides of Burke's own thinking: what O'Brien calls the

“harpist” Burke, advocating grand reforms for noble reasons, and the “common sense, down-to-earth Burke, concerned with practical interests and assessment of forces”. 2017, I suggest, is a time for harpists.

Britain faces two great immediate challenges with which Burke’s successors in Parliament are wrestling. The first is how to reduce public spending to balance the national finances and thereby start, at last, shrinking the national debt. The down-to-earth Burke would manage the task of adjusting to austerity in the same way that, in most cases, the Coalition government did:

salami-slicing budgets without reforming the services they support, and trusting to the good sense of local public servants to adapt their work to the new realities.

The harpist Burke, by contrast, would see austerity in a historical perspective

But it is difficult to see Burke supporting the EU itself; everything he objected to in revolutionary France – its cant about equality and human rights, its geometrical tyranny, its bogus internationalism – is reflected in the modern European pseudo-state.

– the final bankruptcy of a model built on the illusion that government can supply all the wants of all the people – and seize the moment for reform. We need better practical politicians than Burke himself to do this work, but it is the work that’s needed: only by reforming the public sector can we reduce demand on the state to a point the taxpayer can afford.

The second challenge is how to extricate ourselves from the European Union and reset our relations with the world. It is possible that Burke, in his down-to-earth incarnation, might have been a Remainer, much as many conservatives were – for reasons of practical common sense and concern for the disruption big changes can cause to little people.

But it is difficult to see Burke supporting the EU itself; everything he objected to in revolutionary France – its cant about equality and human rights, its geometrical tyranny, its bogus internationalism – is reflected in the modern European pseudo-state.

Burke objected to big changes in long-established, naturally-evolved institutions which may appear irrational but are in fact habituated to real life. The EU is none such: recently-evolved,



supremely rational, it, not Brexit, represents the incursion into the settled life of Britain which must be resisted. Surely here the harpist should predominate – albeit with a set of practical politicians and negotiators in the lead. I hope Burke would endorse the Prime Minister’s sense that Brexit must be done properly, if at all – we need full extrication from the institutions of the EU if we are to benefit from the opportunities of global trade.

A subtext to much Brexiteer rhetoric is “the war”, and Churchill’s (the supreme harpist) achievement of liberation from continental

As Jesse Norman shows, one of Burke’s great contributions was to identify, and rebuke, the emergence of this figure in his own day, and to challenge “the idea that human wellbeing is just a matter of satisfying individual wants”.

traditions of British settlement even as it created new ones; so, I think, he would see Brexit. 🐕



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oppression. A better reference is to the American Revolution – the formation of a new country, to be sure, but one that sought its inspiration from its inheritance of political liberty, the common law and property rights. Burke saw the American Revolution to be continuing the

A LEGITIME REACTION AGAINST LIBERAL OLIGARCHY

by John O'Sullivan

The *spectre de jour* is the rise in “populism” or what the media and the political classes call populism – namely, the emergence of new parties, some Left, some Right, some a blend of the two, that challenge the mainstream parties, campaign on issues that the existing parties have neglected, and become a serious and perhaps permanent part of the political system. A recent issue of the *Journal of Democracy*, published by America's National Endowment for Democracy, provided a handy compendium of all the parties defined as populist. Takis S Pappas, a Greek political theorist living in Hungary, listed 22 different parties in this broad category. Seven have held power in coalition and another four alone. They are serious challengers to the mainstream Left and Right.

That is not, of course, the way that political establishments, existing parties, or the media, or Professor Pappas want us to think about populism. As the professor sees it, these parties are challengers to democracy.

He is echoed by many other political commentators who instruct us as follows: the main choice before us today is that between populism and liberal democracy – which hardly seems like a choice at all. It sounds more like a slogan to conscript the voters into continuing to vote for what are called the “legacy parties” without thinking too much about it.

And as we shall see, populism and liberal democracy, though common terms in the higher journalism, are indeed slippery ones. Consider the textbook accounts of populism. Among other things, it supposedly describes a movement that is personalist, rooted in a leader-principle, hostile to the “regime of the parties,” and based on blending Left and Right in a vague new synthesis.

If that is the case, then the most successful populist leader in Europe today is Emmanuel Macron, President of France. He denounced the existing parties as corrupt and incompetent (not without some evidence); he founded a new party based around himself – EM standing for both

The most successful populist leader in Europe today is Emmanuel Macron.

En Marche and Emmanuel Macron; he carefully selected both parliamentary candidates and Cabinet members on the basis of being loyal to him and “untainted” by the past; he advanced a set of policies that blended “pro-business” economic reforms with extreme social liberalism on identity politics, which in France counts as Left and Right; and finally, since his election, he has sought to present himself as a national leader above politics, at one point summoning all the legislators to Versailles where he addressed them for about ninety minutes. (He got bad reviews.) Altogether Macron's performance has been, if anything, an exaggeration of what populism traditionally means.

Yet Macron is never described as populist. Quite the contrary: the EU Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, even hailed his election as the beginning of the end of populism. That is because Brussels and establishment opinion generally approve of his ideological bent which embraces such



familiar policies as multiculturalism, open borders, a banking union to underpin the Euro, and a kind of militant born-again Europeanism. They regard populism as a threat to these policies and so they ignore the populist aspects of the Macron victory. As generally used, therefore, populism is not a neutral dispassionate description but a “boo” word employed to discredit those

Liberal democracy too is also a protean concept that today needs a considerable amount of clarifying.

called populist or to indicate disapproval of them. This definition of populism seeks to end debate rather than to advance or clarify it.

Liberal democracy too is also a protean concept that today needs a considerable amount of clarifying. In the

relatively recent past – the days of FDR and Churchill, JFK and Harold Macmillan, Reagan and Thatcher – liberal democracy meant free competitive elections in an atmosphere of free speech, free assembly, a free press, etc. An election could hardly be free without free speech to allow full discussion of the issues at issue? We fought the Cold War under this sign. To be sure, there were some



helped them to ignore those opinions they opposed. They did so by the simple expedient of not discussing these issues – in the common phrase, by keeping them out of politics – and leaving the courts or others to carry them out. Immigration is one example of such excluded policies in many countries. Majoritarian democracy in these conditions mutates into a system that the Hudson Institute’s John Fonte calls post-democracy, in which elites and the institutions they control exercise more power than the voters and their elected representatives.

But every action stimulates a reaction. So the more power has shifted to liberal institutions in recent years, the more populism has emerged to demand that the will of the voters should be respected and restraints on it removed. That is what the recent surges of populism represent.

But the opposite is also true. If majority rule remains the driving force of democracy, then populism will be absorbed within traditional democratic debate and made subject to its conventions. The UK referendum on Brexit achieved exactly that. Once the voters had made their decision, *and once the government had accepted and promised to implement it,*

additional liberal restraints on majority-rule, but they were few and modest in number.

In recent years, however, liberalism has come to mean the proliferation of liberal institutions – the courts, supra-national bodies, charters of rights, independent agencies, UN treaty monitoring bodies, etc – that increasingly restrain and correct parliaments, congresses, and elected officials. This shift of power was questionable when these bodies merely nullified or delayed laws and regulations.

But more recently they have taken to instructing democratically accountable

bodies to make particular reforms and even to impose them on the entire polity through creative constitutional and treaty interpretation. Their decisions have concerned a wide range of official powers from welfare rules through gay marriage and deportation (of, among others, convicted terrorists.) Liberal democracy under this definition becomes the undemocratic imposition of liberal policies.

This transfer of power has happened in part because progressive elites at the top of mainstream political parties have gone along with it. It

Brexit became an orthodox part of the political debate, with the government proposing measures to implement it, the opposition suggesting amendments to those measures, the courts hearing cases to ensure that Brexit is pursued within the rules of the political game, and so on.

UKIP then saw its support drain away since one mainstream party – the government, too – adopted its signature issue and are carried it into practical effect as the small and relatively powerless UKIP simply cannot do.

Once we take these (fairly major) developments into account, it becomes possible to craft a definition of populism that is not simply a way of abusing a political

party or jeering at its arguments without meeting them honestly and seriously. Professor Mudde has given us one such definition above: populism is an illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism. Another was given unintentionally by Professor Pappas when he said, I quote: “Populist parties embrace democracy but not liberalism. Liberalism without democracy is not a combination found in real-life polities today.” It is his second sentence that discloses the definition we need. For liberalism without democracy is an apt description of the system of government towards which the West has been moving since 1989 and populism is the resistance to it.

However we juggle things, our main political choice seems to be evolving into one between some sort of democratic populism and some form of liberal or, in less deceptive language, some form of progressive elitism. Conservatives in Europe have little choice but to choose the populist democratic side because that is where our voters live. If necessary we must civilise their populism within restraints not of progressive liberalism but of that very different thing: ordered liberty. 🐕



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WHY DO PROMS MUSICIANS ALL SEEM TO TREAD THE SAME NARROW POLITICAL PATH?

by Damian Thompson

Another season of the BBC Proms – “the world’s greatest festival of classical music” – has ended, and yet again I didn’t make it to a single concert. The unventilated Albert Hall isn’t a great concert venue: you sweat while trying to listen through the muffled boom of the acoustic and as you get older it’s just too much hassle.

But this year there was an extra reason to lose patience with the Proms. The soloist on the first night, the 30-year-old German-Russian pianist Igor Levit, forced the audience to listen to his own anti-Brexit protest – an arrangement of Beethoven’s *Ode to Joy* from his Ninth Symphony.

The EU hijacking of this mighty tune as its anthem always got up my nose, even in the days when I supported the Common Market. We can’t know that the notoriously contrarian Beethoven would have approved, any more than he would have



“The surprising thing is that so many classical musicians, from whom you might expect a thoughtful disposition, are more querulous and bitter than your typical luvvie.”

Damian Thompson

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supported its appropriation by Ian Smith’s Rhodesia. As for his views on Brexit, is Levit unaware that the composer became an obsessive Anglophile in disgust at Napoleon’s attempt to build a European empire?

Igor Levit really is a sad case. A few years ago he recorded performances of Beethoven’s late piano sonatas and *Diabelli Variations*; you have to go back nearly 60 years, to the first Beethoven cycle of Alfred Brendel, to hear a pianist in his 20s play this repertoire with such a balance of virtuosity and intellectual insight.

You would expect a young musician with such a refined understanding of the slow movement of the *Hammerklavier* to express equally subtle political opinions – even if they tilt in a predictably liberal direction.

Instead, we’re offered this: “Hey, Nigel Farage, you can talk BS anywhere you like but the difference is: your poison won’t affect us anymore. Not the majority. Fuck off.” And to Senator Jeff Sessions: “Fuck you, you fascist coward. Same to you, Donald Trump.”

These are tweets, obviously. Perhaps Levit’s outbursts wouldn’t be so



Classical music, compared to other art forms, has a tiny popular following relative to its cultural significance.

comically splenetic if Twitter didn't encourage him. But I also suspect that social media platforms are simply making public something that has been obvious to insiders for many years – that classical musicians are addicted to Left-wing posturing.

Here's another example. Mahan Esfahani, an Iranian-American in his 30s, is that rare thing: a harpsichordist with popular appeal. That appeal may not last, however, if he keeps ear-bashing his audiences with slogans in support of Black Lives Matter and insisting that "anyone who voted for Trump is by definition an anti-Semite". Yet in his own circles such views are uncontroversial.

It goes without saying that the political consensus in the arts world is Left-liberal.

The surprising thing is that so many classical musicians, from whom you might expect a thoughtful disposition, are more querulous and bitter than your typical luvvie.

One factor is that they are more dependent than any other artists on state funding: they are as dependent on grant-making bodies (especially European ones) as their predecessors were on noble households.

That's because classical music, compared to other art forms, has a tiny popular following relative to its cultural significance. And that following, outside of East Asia, is monolithically white and middle-class. There are very few black faces at the Proms, despite the desperately earnest "outreach" of concert halls and orchestras to ethnic minorities.

Igor Levit belongs to one of the world's most inward-looking elites. This seems to trouble him, and so he takes it out on Brexiteers and Trump voters who are actually far more diverse than his audiences. Most of them haven't heard of him, though Nigel Farage has. "He's an apparently civilised man who behaves like a Stalinist lout," he told me.

That's a bit strong, you might think, but then consider the carelessness with which Levit flings around the word "Nazi". Also, there really is something slightly Stalinist about his party line. I know of one major figure in the classical music world who supports Brexit. He has a family to support; can you blame him for keeping his views to himself? 🐾

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