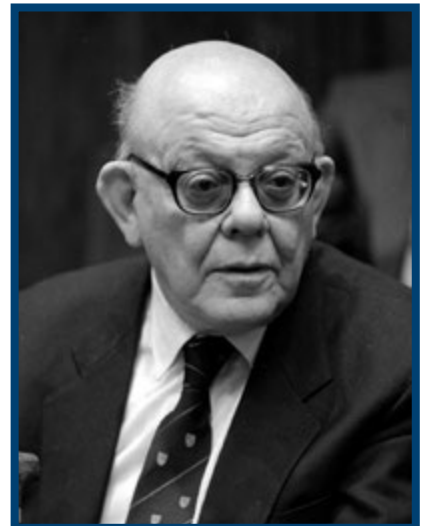
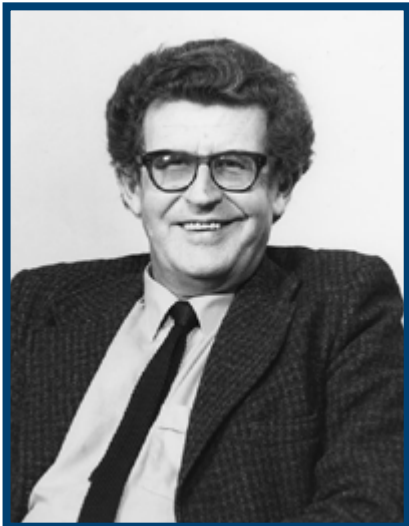
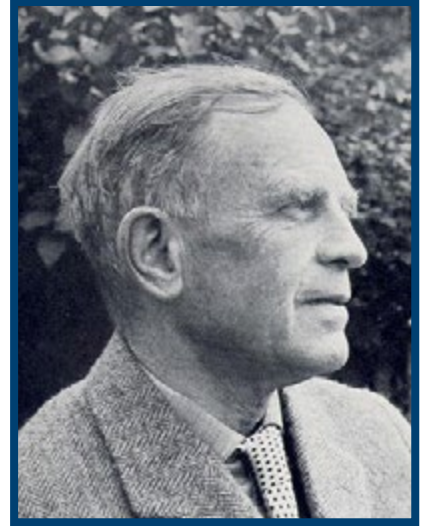
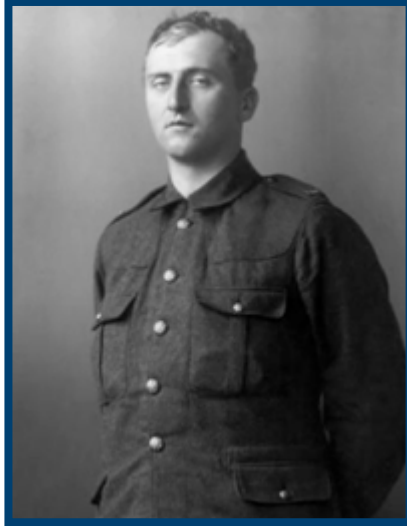


THE EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVE

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A conservative re-birth in Europe?

Europe is often treated with scorn by American conservatives. The reliance of European states on social safety nets and protectionist economic policies, as well as the apparent penchant of its citizens for short work-weeks and long vacations, have always seemed anathema to the conservative mind. And a fundamental divide has long separated European and American views of capitalism, free enterprise, and the role of the state.

How things have changed! Today, under Obama, the US is moving toward a European socio-economic model, as the Acton Institute's Sam Gregg eloquently demonstrates in *Becoming Europe* (2013). Meanwhile, Europe, while still seemingly enthralled by statist policies at the level of political elites (perhaps even more so, given the growth of the European Union), appears to be exhibiting signs of something new at the grass-roots level, with citizens increasingly showing an appreciation for limited government and personal responsibility. And despite years of cultural drift, more Europeans are expressing concern about abortion, euthanasia, and immigration, and showing a willingness to defend marriage, the family, and religious belief.

There are also growing numbers of intellectually engaged conservatives across Europe. A decade ago, the publication of a collection of conservative essays — *Den konservativt årstid (The Conservative Season)* — by a group of young scholars and politicians in Denmark was unusual (especially since they drew inspiration from people like Eric Voegelin, Friedrich Hayek, and Leo Strauss). But the Danes no longer seem like outliers: Last year marked the publication of *Ny Vind Over Norge (New Wind Over Norway)*, which gathered contributions from classical liberals and conservatives in Norway. Meanwhile, in the Netherlands and Spain, foundations named after Edmund Burke teach students about the Anglo-American conservative intellectual tradition and make available (in translation) seminal works by Michael Oakeshott, Russell Kirk, and Lee Edwards, among others. In Italy, a group in the Veneto region has started a 'Margaret Thatcher Circle', whose goal is nothing less than the creation of a new political movement with candidates that embody conservative Anglo-Saxon values. These are welcome developments.

It used to be that those seeking conservative European thought had to go back centuries for suitable exponents. They could choose from reactionaries like Joseph de Maistre or Donoso Cortés, or rely on more palatable texts by Burke, Coleridge, Hooker, Disraeli, and Churchill. Robert Schuettinger did so in his 1970 *The Conservative Tradition in European Thought*. Things improved slightly in 1988 with newer voices published in the *Conservative Thinkers* collection edited by Roger Scruton. Today the situation has improved. *Standpoint* and *The Salisbury Review*, both conservative UK publications, regularly publish fresh conservative voices. But there has been no 'European' conservative publication. Until now.

We recognize that to speak of 'European conservatives' as a category is highly problematic. But we are convinced that if we continue to speak in our own language to narrow audiences in our own countries, then



European conservatism will never achieve 'critical mass' to effectively participate in the broader 'long war' in which our civilization is engaged. Hence, *The European Conservative* aims to bring together classical liberals, libertarians, and traditionalist conservatives, among others, every six months (more or less) in an effort to grapple vigorously with the political, economic,

and cultural challenges we face today. Inspired by the late William F. Buckley Jr., we hope to forge a cohesive conservative movement out of the disparate and fractious elements of the 'European Right' and all who are concerned about the future of the West.

This edition felicitously coincides with the 50th anniversary of the *Philadelphia Society* in the US. It can thus serve as a good introduction for our American friends to the exciting work in Europe. The *Philadelphia Society* says its purpose is to "to sponsor the interchange of ideas through discussion and writing, in the interest of deepening the intellectual foundation of a free and ordered society, and of broadening the understanding of its basic principles and traditions". *The European Conservative* exists for this same reason.

Several features and re-prints in this edition are worth highlighting: *Harald Bergbauer* offers an analysis of the outcomes of Germany's federal elections in September — and explains why German conservatives are ill-served by the Christian Democratic Party under Angela Merkel. *Emmanuel Arthault* profiles the outstanding work of the *Institut de Formation Politique* in Paris, which, for the last ten years, has been engaged in a formidable task: teaching French students about conservative ideas — so that they may eventually work towards a renewal of France. *Martin Kugler*, a founder of Austria's *Observatory* on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe, provides an overview of the different threats to religious freedom in Europe. And *Filip Mazurczak* offers his thoughts on the erosion of Europe's religious roots, reminding us of their essential role in the development of Western civilization. We also introduce a new feature: "War Notes". Inspired by a re-discovery of the strong, uncompromising writings of *T.E. Hulme*, we invite readers to submit their own withering critiques of modern liberalism.

Finally, this Winter edition honours the memory of two outstanding European scholars who made lasting impressions on generations of students. Australian political theorist *Kenneth Minogue* is beautifully eulogized by David Martin Jones of the University of Queensland, and Spanish philosopher *Leonardo Polo* is affectionately remembered by Fernando Múgica, director of the philosophy department at the University of Navarra. Their passing reminds us of the need to find and cultivate new thinkers among Europeans — for it is only through them that we can hope to reverse the present cultural decline, and return Europe and the West to the greatness of which former generations spoke. *Ut sit.*

The European Conservative is a publication of the **Center for European Renewal (CER)** based in The Hague, The Netherlands. It is published twice a year, with summer and winter editions. Back issues are available in PDF format at www.europeanconservative.com. We welcome unsolicited manuscripts and extend a "latitudinarian welcome to all of the many varieties of [respectable conservatism], including, among others, anti-statists, traditionalists, free-market enthusiasts, ..., constitutional monarchists ..., and strict anti-communists" (Daniel Kelly in *Living on Fire*). For more information about the CER, its mission and its activities, please visit: www.europeanrenewal.org

Cover: Top (L-R): Burke, Hulme, Röpke; Middle: Minogue, Thatcher, Polo; Bottom: Brague, Kinneging, Scruton.

Germany's 2013 Elections

Harald Bergbauer

On 22 September 2013, the citizens of Germany conducted their federal elections. The outcome was a veritable surprise for many Germans: Angela Merkel, chancellor of the Federal Republic since 2005 and head of the Christian Democratic Party (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* or CDU), was re-elected with 41.5% of the vote. (Part of this went to the Christian Social Union (*Christlich-Soziale Union* or CSU), the CDU's sister party in Bavaria.) The 41.5% result corresponded to 311 seats out of 630 in the German Bundestag, the lower house of parliament. But this was still five seats short of an absolute majority, forcing Merkel to look for a coalition partner. (An absolute majority has only ever been achieved once in the history of the Federal Republic: in 1957 by Konrad Adenauer, the first chancellor of the Federal Republic.)

The German political order is marked by a multi-party system which, between 2009 and 2013, consisted of five parties represented in the federal parliament. In order of importance, these parties were the conservative union comprised of the CDU and CSU, followed by the liberal Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei* or FDP), the centre-left Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* or SPD), the Greens, and the Left. In addition to the 41.5% result for the CDU/CSU, the results of the 2013 federal elections was 25.7% for the SPD, 8.6% for the Left, 8.4% for the Greens, and 4.8% for the FDP. According to German law, there exists a clause for parties in the federal parliament specifying that only parties obtaining 5% or more of the vote are allowed to participate in proceedings in the Bundestag. Any party with less than 5% is excluded from participating in federal politics.

Because of this regulation, we have now entered a period of election surprises. A first surprise concerned the FDP which, having obtained only 4.8% of the vote, were not allowed to enter parliament. Therefore, they could not form a coalition with Merkel whose own conservative CDU lacked just five seats to govern on its own. In the previous legislative period between 2009 and 2013, Merkel had been able to form a coalition with the FDP, as she did with the SPD between 2005 and 2009. But the continuation of a coalition between CDU/CSU and the FDP was brought to an end after the elections of 2013.

A second surprise was the unexpected rise of a completely new political party with the telling denomination, Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland* or AfD). Founded in late 2013, it obtained, almost like the FDP, 4.7% of the vote. But unlike the FDP — a party traditionally made up of proud defenders of civil liberties and free markets but, at the same time, supporters of the Merkel's Euro rescue measures — the AfD attacked the Euro policies of the federal government outright and advocated the dissolution of the whole Euro

area. Contrary to the FDP who fell from 14.6 % of the vote in 2009 to 4.8% in 2013, the AfD rose from 0% to 4.7% in a matter of months. This ascent was a big surprise for all observers — and even for party officials of the AfD.

Much like the German liberals, "Alternative for Germany" backs liberal values — but it rejects the whole European project. In Germany, it is often simply called the "anti-Euro-party" and this fact both attracts and repulses many Germans. Repudiation of the party is as passionate an activity for some voters as is its endorsement for others. Although there exists a certain commonality between the CDU/CSU and the AfD with regard to platform (with the obvious exception of total exit from the Euro), a coalition between them was excluded from the very beginning since the AfD failed to enter parliament with only 4.7%.

A third surprise, closely connected to the first two developments, concerned the fact that a majority of Germans voted for a conservative (CDU/CSU) and liberal (FDP and AfD) government but without the chance of having a conservative-liberal coalition. The votes for the three main parties actually add up to 51% (41.5 + 4.8 + 4.7). It is only because of the 5% clause that the union of the CDU and CSU wasn't allowed to form a coalition either with the liberals (FDP) or the AfD. And it was thus that the formal criterion of the 5% clause forced Merkel to enter coalition talks with the Greens and the SPD in the weeks following the federal elections.

To tell it right from the beginning, neither the Greens nor the SPD were excited about setting up a coalition with Merkel in 2013. Both the centre-left SPD and the liberal FDP left their coalitions with Merkel back in 2009 and 2013, respectively, with more or less disastrous outcomes. The SPD got 34.2% in 2005 before entering the coalition with Merkel but left it in 2009 with just 23% — which is 11.2% worse. Similar is the situation with the FDP which got 14.6% in 2009 before entering the coalition with the CDU/CSU but left it in 2013 with just 4.8% — a deterioration of 9.8%. The feeling soon spread after the 2013 federal elections that whatever party engaged with Merkel would almost be entirely absorbed — or at least thoroughly weakened — by the end of the legislative period. It is widely thought that she will undermine any coalition partner's positions and attract voters from coalition partners to her CDU/CSU. Thus, cooperating with Merkel in a coalition is a risky matter; for the FDP, with their expulsion from the Bundestag, it was a deadly step.

The coalition talks with the Greens, which ended nearly three weeks after the 2013 federal elections, revealed their insurmountable differences with the CDU. Not only do many conservatives regard the Greens as unreliable protesters and, therefore, wholly distrust the party in general but they held significantly contradictory positions. In the weeks before Election Day, for example, the CDU promised that there wouldn't be any tax increase, while the Greens announced that a tax increase of €28 billion (about

\$38 billion) was an unavoidable step in order to finance up-to-date social and environmental projects. Thus, with such divergent positions, no compromise was negotiable.

A second argument was about the energy policies of the federal government. In June 2011, in the wake of the nuclear catastrophe of Fukushima, the government decided to gradually shut down the country's nuclear power plants. The idea is that renewable energy will replace 50% of nuclear energy by 2030, and 80% by 2050. The Greens rejected this long-term plan and pushed instead for a quicker replacement of nuclear power with clean energy sources such as wind, biomass, hydro-power, photovoltaic, etc. Finding a compromise on these issues wasn't possible either.

After the failure of coalition negotiations between the CDU and the Greens, the CDU intensified its efforts to come to an agreement with the SPD. The Greens were also reluctant to become Merkel's junior partner, fearing that they could be exhausted and eventually weakened after four years of cooperation. At the same time, they were attracted by the chance to be a part of the federal government and, in that way, having an opportunity to determine Germany's political development over the next four years. Despite these apprehensions, the CDU and the SPD entered negotiations on a multitude of policy areas for about ten weeks, the outcome of which was a coalition agreement that was signed on 16 December 2013 by the heads of the CDU, CSU, and SPD.

Since the end of 2013 Germans have been getting almost daily news about the government's work and are being informed about the tensions between the coalition partners. The problems the government has to tackle are numerous because the positions of the two parties often hold irreconcilable standpoints. At the time when the coalition was forged, the henchmen of the Union argued that Merkel has to lead the coalition and decide disputed issues because her party got 41.5% of the vote whereas the SPD only got 25.7%. It would be inconsistent if the SPD got the same weight. But exactly the same influence like the Union's was demanded by the SPD. They insisted on the same political weight in the coalition saying that otherwise their positions wouldn't be heard in the republic

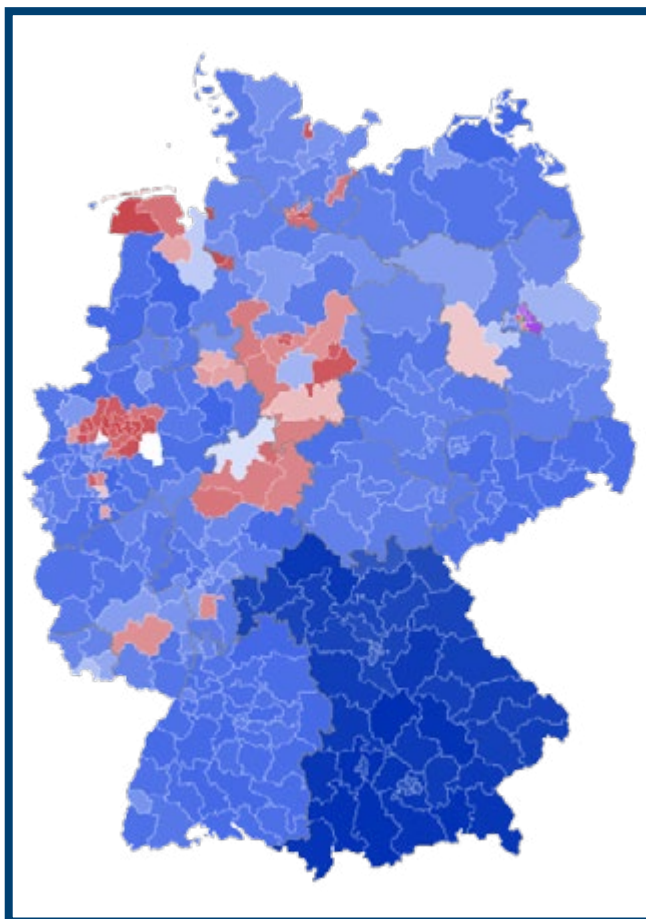
and weaken the party. If they weren't offered the same influence, they wouldn't enter the coalition. Merkel gave in.

One example highlighting the differences between the coalition partners has to do with the government's Euro rescue plans. Merkel once coined the phrase: "When the Euro fails, Europe fails". With these words, she expressed

support for the survival of the Euro; but this support is not without conditions. Merkel is well known for her tough stance on austerity and has called for deep structural reforms in highly indebted Euro-zone nations. But her pro-European attitude has its limits and these are too strict for the SPD. For example, Merkel has opposed the decision of Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank, to do "everything necessary" to save the Euro. His intention to buy up the government bonds of crisis-ridden Euro-zone countries and thereby take on risks amounting to billions of Euros — for which mostly German taxpayers would be liable — has been rejected by Merkel. The SPD, however, has called for more European solidarity and integration, and are thus decisively in favour of supporting extensive payments for indebted Euro-zone countries.

Another example of the differences between the CDU and the SPD has to do

with current pension reform plans. As proposed by Andrea Nahles, Secretary of Labour and a member of the SPD, all mothers who have borne and raised children before 1992 should be entitled to a pension — to compensate them for their absence from work. This measure was accompanied by a second decision, which offered employees a pension at age 63 (instead of 65) after 45 years of work, provided they have paid their taxes and social security contributions over the years. But these measures amount to additional expenditures of €4.4 billion (about \$5.9 billion) in 2014, and to €9 billion (about \$12.2 billion) in 2015. These pension reforms will cost an additional €60 billion (about \$81.5 billion) to 2020. This, combined with the introduction of a universal minimum wage of €8.5 (about \$11.7), which has also been proposed by the SPD (and which is to be applied, regardless of economic power, in all German states over the next few years), has made German industry profoundly angry and made business leaders warn of severe consequences.



Parliamentary districts won by select parties. Dark blue: CSU, Light Blue: CDU, Red: SPD, Purple: The Left. *Image courtesy of Wablatlas.*

What does the new political constellation in the German government mean for conservatives? With regard to the Euro crisis, the majority of Germans seem to appreciate the attitude of Merkel — which is to support Euro rescue measures, on the one hand, while simultaneously limiting further support on the other. But the unexpected rise of the Euro-sceptic AfD, however, has shown that many people simply don't agree with Merkel's wavering Euro decisions and prefer to turn to the more resolute AfD.

In addition, the extensive pension plans recently devised by the SPD entail an enormous increase in redistribution, which implies an enlargement of state authority. This represents not only an additional financial burden for the younger generation, which has to finance these welfare plans, but a loss of overall freedom. Many German conservatives are outraged by these decisions and feel their principles have been betrayed by the government. If one adds to this the government's new energy policy, originally introduced in 2011, which contradicts the intention to shut down all nuclear power plants within the next few decades, it is understandable why Merkel's standing among conservatives has rapidly fallen.

Many observers have praised Merkel for her pragmatic, low-key, and step-by-step approach to

politics; others have blamed her for sacrificing the classical liberal and conservative principles of self-reliance and subsidiarity. The differences between her CDU and the SPD are blurring, and the slow shift of many of the CDU's positions to the left is dangerous. Merkel, critics say, is not truly practicing politics in a manner that requires the making of hard decisions; rather, she seems to be avoiding taking clear stances and solid positions. Crude self-preservation and maintaining a hold on power seem to be her only guiding principles — not real engagement with Christian issues on behalf of conservative principles. A *Muttisierung* ('motherisation') is the consequence.

If one views Merkel through the lens of genuine conservative principles, then the outcome will seem less praise-worthy than if viewed by a neutral observer. How sharp and searing a judgment depends on one's own principles and convictions; but by no means has conservatism in Germany gotten a lift from the federal elections of 2013. ■

Dr. Bergbauer is assistant professor of political theory at the School of Political Science and the University of Armed Forces, both in Munich. From 2004 to 2008, he worked at the Foundation of Conservative Education and Research with the late Caspar von Schrenck-Notzing.

Preparing for a Renewal of France

Emmanuel Arthault

The French *Institut de Formation Politique* (IFP) is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. This education and training institute was created in 2004 by Alexandre Pesey (its current Executive Director), Jean Martinez (a lawyer), and Thomas Millon (an entrepreneur).

"We were three friends who had pretty much the same experience on universities campuses: Progressive ideas were dominant", Pesey says. "Young conservatives were afraid to speak up. And this was also the case in the media and in politics". So the three friends decided to start an organization dedicated to "training young conservatives — in order to bring about a renewal of France".

To date, the IFP has trained 700 promising students. These young activists stand for "liberty, responsibility, and the dignity of the human person" and are eager to "serve their country".

Although training seminars at the IFP take place on weekends, they continue to attract hundreds of students from all over France. "We increased the number of participants per seminar from 16 to 20 last year, but we still cannot accept everyone", says Pesey. "There are often more than 65 candidates"!



Top-notch lecturers like philosopher Rémi Brague, who has spoken about Islam, and Agnès Verdier-Molinié, CEO of the free-market iFRAP Foundation, help participants strengthen their convictions and refine their critical thinking. Other consultants help them improve their rhetorical skills, and increase their confidence during debates and on-camera interviews. Experienced activists are also brought in to teach participants how to manage teams and win elections on campus. "We want to connect theory and practice", Pesey explains. "It allows our graduates to 'think like men of action and to act like men of thought'!"

The IFP certainly encourages its graduates to take action. It even offers incentives. Every year, for example, the 'Claude Razel Prize' is awarded to the best internet-based initiative. The web reviews *Nouvelles de France* and *Contrepoints* won in 2011 and 2012, respectively. Samuel Lafont, an activist who was stabbed in the Paris metro last spring but survived, won the prize in 2013 for leading the fight against gay marriage on social networks and being quoted daily in the press.

Becoming part of the IFP network has become mandatory for any promising and motivated young conservative in France. "Our older graduates are now think-tank researchers and managers, journalists, parliamentary staffers", says Pesey. The IFP has also



A guest speaker at a recent training session held at the IFP in central Paris. *Photograph courtesy of the IFP.*

launched the Law and Policy Circle last winter, with the help of the Federalist Society. “It was fundamental to help our graduates who are lawyers get to know each other — in order to better prepare for the fight against the wicked laws the socialist government is planning”, he says. A dinner for graduates is organized every month in Paris to which prominent intellectuals — like Reynald Sécher, historian of the Vendée genocide of the 18th century — are invited.

The IFP’s success owes nothing to chance. Pesey is a born entrepreneur: He interned at Morton Blackwell’s Washington-based Leadership Institute, and learned how to fundraise and run an organization like a private firm. The *Institut de Formation Politique* refuses all public subsidies and relies on the support of thousands of generous donors.

Pesey, who is also a member of the board of the conservative Center for European Renewal in The Hague, understands what the conservative movement needs in order to achieve a profound civilizational revitalisation: “We must put aside our differences”, he says. “There are too many unproductive rivalries,” he says, adding: “That must be our Gallic heritage”! Indeed, the IFP works hard to help its graduates understand the importance of coalitions and spirit of collaboration.

The French media has already noticed the IFP. The renowned (and progressive) newspaper *Le Monde* published a piece last summer profiling the IFP, calling it “the school of French Liberal-Conservatives”. This is a fierce attack in a country where economic liberalism and social conservatism are still widely unpopular.

In the meantime, the IFP’s graduates have been contributing to important societal changes — such as the defence of traditional marriage. “The Left is panicking because of last year’s opposition to gay marriage”, Pesey says. The *Manif Pour Tous* (Protest for Everyone) movement, in which hundreds of thousands of people participated, emerged from civil society and surprised the French political establishment, he says. “Of course, since many prominent activists in that movement were IFP graduates, the media targeted us”. The IFP has never sought media attention, Pesey says. “Our graduates nevertheless loved the article”, laughs Pesey.

After decades of counter-cultural dominance, France is now slowly shifting right. “There is undeniably a true conservative rebirth going on in France”, Pesey says. “And we are doing our part by helping the new generation be more realistic and more effective about political action — in a word: more professional”. ■



Professor Rémi Brague speaking about the importance of philosophy for politics. *Photograph courtesy of the IFP.*

Mr. Arthault is a writer based in Paris. For more information about the IFP, please visit: www.ifpfrance.org

Communism's Remains

Marion Smith

This year marks 25 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of communism in Europe. At the time, it looked like President Ronald Reagan's hope that the "march of freedom and democracy will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history" would become reality. But that goal has not yet been fully realized. A discredited ideology that mocks the role of religion and denies basic characteristics of human nature — such as individuality, entrepreneurship, and the desire for free expression — still controls the lives and fortunes of many millions of people.

Amazingly, one-fifth of the world still lives under communist regimes. In China, the *laogai* — the Asian counterpart to the infamous Soviet gulag — holds millions of religious and political prisoners. *Today*, in 2014. And communist ideology is respectfully discussed in academia, where students are regularly taught that communism is a good idea that has never been properly implemented and that the Cold War was caused by American aggression.

In Europe, an extreme left-wing party is currently the largest opposition party in Greece. The third largest party in the Czech Republic is communist. And communists participate in ruling coalitions in a dozen countries around the world, in addition to the five remaining communist countries: China, Laos, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba.

You would think that raising the standard of a violent, totalitarian ideology that enslaved millions might put a damper on your electoral prospects in the 21st century. Not so.

With little discussion or recognition, the free world has gone from fighting global communism for nearly half a century to suddenly forgetting about its existence. Most alarmingly, communism's 100 million victims remain largely lost to history.

Such amnesia is deeply troubling — and dangerous. A nation that simply moves on from the devastating trauma caused by a communist regime without learning critical lessons from that experience, and without remembering its victims,

risks losing part of its humanity.

Edmund Burke said that every society spans the past, present, and future, and the ensuing historical bond sustains a people; a nation's close connection to its past is a sure sign of that nation's health. Much of the world, however, has opted for deliberate indifference to the communist crimes of the past century. This must be challenged. When people neglect the lessons to be learned from the experience of communism, they dishonour its victims and its survivors.

Enter the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, a bi-partisan, non-profit organization authorized in 1993 by a unanimous act of the United States Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton. For more than twenty years, the Foundation has worked to educate the world about the ideology, history, and legacy of communism.

To this end, it has awarded an annual Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to more than 55 distinguished men and women who have heroically challenged totalitarian regimes and defended freedom and democracy — people such as Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, and Vladimir Bukovsky.

It has also developed and published a high school curriculum for American students about communism.

And has created a comprehensive interactive virtual exhibit on communism, which has been visited online by hundreds of thousands of people from around the world.

In 2007, the Foundation dedicated in Washington, D.C., the world's first memorial to all the victims of communism, modelled after the "Goddess of Democracy" statue erected by Chinese students in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Building on these successes, the Foundation is now launching a global capital campaign to build the International Museum on Communism in Washington. It plans to break ground in 2017, on the centennial of the Bolshevik Revolution. As the only museum in the world dedicated to educating the public about the global history of communism and commemorating its victims, it will serve as a popular destination for students, scholars, and survivors from around the world.



The Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recognizes heroic opponents of totalitarianism in all its forms.



The “Goddess of Democracy” memorial in Washington, DC, which honours the many victims of communism.

This museum will also seek to create a living memory of the victims and crimes of communism — a mission that grows more urgent every day with the passing of elderly survivors. To that end, the Foundation has launched a key initiative: the Witness Project, which collects and distributes on-camera interviews with survivors of communist regimes.

Dissidents from Soviet Russia, refugees from Castro’s Cuba, victims of Viet Cong violence, and those from many other nations all offer dramatic personal stories that illustrate the horrors and inhumanity of life under communist tyranny.

With a significant seed grant, a revitalized fundraising effort, and an expanded and dedicated staff, the Foundation is on track to build the International Museum on Communism — and help to finally put this toxic ideology on history’s “ash-heap”. ■

Mr. Smith is executive director of the [Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation](#) in Washington, DC, and founder and president of the [Common Sense Society](#), an educational foundation active in the United States and Europe.

The Challenge of Religious Freedom

Martin Kugler

Last year, we celebrated 1,700 years since the Edict of Milan granted freedom of religion across the Roman Empire. Enacted by Emperor Constantine, this famous document granted freedom of religion “to Christians and others the full authority to observe that religion which each preferred” in order to promote “peace and support the common good”. For the Emperor, this meant that religious observance had to be “free and open”, “without molestation”, and “without conditions”.

But in Western Europe today, religious freedom is under threat. Over the past six years, the Vienna-based Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe has documented more than 1,000 cases of intolerance and discrimination against Christians. It has catalogued hate crimes and incidents, negative stereotyping and exclusion, and has also looked at new legal restrictions affecting Christians. And for many human rights experts, the Observatory’s research has become a surprising — though disturbing — source of news and information about religious tolerance and freedom of religion in Europe.

Compared to the situation faced by Christians in several countries of the Middle East and Africa, it might seem like an exaggeration to focus on Europe as an important locus of religious freedom problems. For this

reason, the Observatory never speaks of persecution; it does not even use the terms ‘Christophobia’ or ‘Christianophobia’ when talking about problems in the western world. A ‘phobia’ means an irrational fear towards hardly-known threats and, in this context, there is nothing unknown or even irrational about what happens in Europe.

Rather, the Observatory distinguishes between persecution by radical Muslims or dictators in developing countries, and the challenges faced by Christians in the European Union and North America. It speaks of ‘intolerance’ and ‘discrimination’ against Christians, which are the terms used by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to describe the denial of equal rights of Christians and the social marginalisation of Christians. Thus, the term ‘intolerance’ refers to the social dimension, while the term ‘discrimination’ refers to the legal dimensions.

Growing Attacks, Threatened Areas

Emperor Constantine dedicated a large part of his Edict to securing places of assembly and worship for Christians. Today, we see a rising number of attacks against such places. For example, 84% of vandalism in France in 2010 was directed against Christian sites, according to a letter addressed to the Council of Europe by the then French Minister of the Interior, Brice Hortefeux.

The Observatory's own research shows the same. In a survey conducted with the support of Vatican nuntiatures across Europe, it documented 41 laws which affect Christians adversely. The survey asked whether a Christian can wear a religious symbol in public and mention his or her faith in a private conversation at work; whether a Christian caretaker or medical doctor is forced to do things he holds to be unethical; whether a Christian entrepreneur is forced to deliver services against his or her conscience; and whether Christian parents cannot opt their children out of mandatory sexuality education which might stand in direct opposition to their convictions.

The results indicated that there were, indeed, restrictions in all these areas. They could be categorized largely into five areas: 'Freedom of Conscience', 'Freedom of Expression', 'Freedom of Assembly', 'Parental Rights', and 'Discriminatory Equality Policies'. Let us consider each of these areas for a moment:

Freedom of Conscience: Growing restrictions in this area are affecting more and more medical staff and pharmacists in several EU-member states like France, the UK and Sweden. The principle of freedom of conscience dictates that no one should be forced to act against his or her conscience. And it is a key indicator of freedom if this fundamental right is respected — not only on a collective level (e.g. towards Christian hospitals who do not deliver abortion or euthanasia) but also on the individual level.

Freedom of Expression: This freedom is violated whenever preachers are arrested or sued because they have, for example, criticized Islam or homosexual behaviour — even if they do so in a non-aggressive or moderate way. It may be necessary to criminalize speech when there is a clear and imminent danger that such speech advocates violence. But the mere act of refusing a specific lifestyle or ideology should not lead to criminal investigation or prosecution.

Freedom of Assembly and Association: The right to peaceably assemble (and pray in front of abortion clinics, for example) has been outlawed in some European countries. In other countries, peaceful Christian protests have been disrupted by left-wing radicals with no intervention by the police. Sometimes the police do intervene to protect others' right of association. Last summer, for example, police in Austria finally reacted when 30 pro-abortion activists were arrested for violating the freedom of assembly of a group of pro-life activists.

Parental Rights: Increasingly, the rights of parents to decide the best way to educate their children about sexuality, and in a way that is not contrary to their convictions as Christians, are being ignored. This growing problem is becoming worse in countries where home-schooling generally is forbidden — places like Sweden, Slovakia, Germany, and Croatia. In Germany, for example, some Baptist parents went to jail for a few days last year for not sending their children to a sexually subversive theatre play called "My Body Belongs to Me".

Discriminatory Equality Policies: In hiring practices, it is prohibited to discriminate against any religion or sexual orientation. Generally, that makes sense. But the

key question is whether such a law should be extended to the entire goods and services sector of the economy as it could end up violating personal autonomy, entrepreneurial freedom, the right to property, freedom of religion, and freedom of conscience — as well as cause major problems for Christians in Europe. A case in point took place a few years ago when an Austrian Protestant bishop wanted to recruit a secretary for his front-office but was told that he would not be allowed to refuse a Muslim wearing a head-scarf.

Various Radical Agendas

One should ask: Who is supporting these kinds of threats against religious freedom in Europe? What agenda lies behind such trends? According to the Observatory's research, the kinds of laws that end up violating the rights of religious people are often pushed for by one of the three following groups: radical feminists, radical homosexual groups, and radical secularists. Each is motivated by a particular set of beliefs:

Feminists: For actual and true equality to exist between men and women, radical feminists believe it is necessary that the provision of abortion, contraception, and biotechnology be completely unrestricted, and that conscientious objection no longer be allowed. They demand that sexual education be mandatory, that it start at an early age, and that it focus on the technicalities of sex and contraception — while not mentioning the meaning of sexuality, love, life, and family which serve only to confuse the sexual act, which is principally about pleasure.

Homosexuals: Gay activists want to prove that homosexuality is completely normal. In order to do this, and in order to achieve complete emancipation for all homosexuals, activists want to legalise gay marriage and gay adoption with full societal recognition. This requires either that religious believers change their fundamental core beliefs or that the Churches and the lay faithful remain completely silent about the moral aspects of their religion with regard to homosexuality. It also requires the removal of employer rights from the Church, not allowing registrars to opt out of performing same-sex weddings, and other similar freedom-destroying measures.

Secularists: Radical secularists seek to exclude religious viewpoints from public life by eliminating all public funding of religion, and forbidding the use of religious clothing and the display of the crucifix in public. They also refuse to accept any political references to religious topics or themes in legal documents. (This was seen during the debate over the European Constitution.) They also disapprove of and seek to reject outspoken Christians from taking public office (such as what happened to the nomination of Rocco Buttiglione in 2004). They are ready to be intolerant in the name of tolerance — and the Christian Churches are one of their biggest targets.

Despite these radical groups, some inter-governmental agencies are seeking to ensure the protection of religious freedom in Europe. In its

Resolution on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians adopted in Belgrade in July 2011, the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly recommended that a "public debate on intolerance and discrimination against Christians be initiated and that the right of Christians to participate fully in public life be ensured", and that "legislation in the participating States, including labour law, equality law, laws on freedom of expression and assembly, and laws related to religious communities and right of conscientious objection be assessed ... in view of discrimination and intolerance against Christians". It also said that it "encourages the media not to spread prejudices against Christians and to combat negative stereotyping".

Accommodating Religious Beliefs

The famous Jewish law professor Joseph Weiler has written that European Christians were first forced into ghettos by Europe's secular society — but then Christians built another wall inside the ghetto in order to be completely safe from secular society. When asked how to get out of this religious 'ghetto', he mentions three ways: first, communicate the idea that faith is not merely a private matter; second, educate others that faith is not separate from or inimical to reason; and third, convince others that the mysterious and ineffable do have a place in our lives. If we can do this, Weiler says, we might have a chance to turn things around, renew people's faith, and perhaps see wonderful things — such as the sight of dozens of baby strollers at the entrances of Europe's churches on a Sunday morning.

However, Europe needs to work harder to understand more deeply the concept of 'reasonable accommodation' of religious beliefs. This idea requires further elaboration but a brilliant quotation from Pope Benedict XVI's address to the Diplomatic Corps on 10 January 2011 may be illuminating:

"Sadly, in certain countries, mainly in the West, one increasingly encounters in political and cultural circles, as well in the media, scarce respect and at times hostility, if not scorn, directed towards religion and towards Christianity in particular. It is clear that if relativism is considered an essential element of democracy, one risks viewing secularity solely in the sense of excluding or, more precisely, denying the social importance of religion. But such an approach creates confrontation and division, disturbs peace, harms human ecology and, by rejecting in principle approaches other than its own, finishes in a dead end. There is thus an urgent need to delineate a positive and open secularity which, grounded in the just autonomy of the temporal order and the spiritual order, can foster healthy cooperation and a spirit of shared responsibility". ■

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Václav Havel's Röpkean Turn

Carl Johan Ljungberg

Economics on a small scale was not always a favourite conservative theme. Dismissed as a "leftish pipe dream", it has been likened to the utopias of Marxism and socialism. Conversely, the objective of growth was often pursued without full regard to its effects. When Burke fought against the excesses of the French revolution and lashed out against its philosophical basis, Jacobinism, he warned of its tendency to breed fanaticism and uniformity, not of its propensity to develop political dirigisme, enterprises that were "too large to fail", and modern collectivism.

But as the global economy has led to ever larger corporate empires, the problem of scale has forced itself upon us and requires reflection by conservatives in particular. Are today's companies with tens of thousands of employees, not to speak of large multinationals, among the legacies that we consider worth 'preserving'? While some individuals within the conservative camp write the question off as a mere technical matter, others are troubled

by this shift in the arena of free enterprise. Their apprehension is often rooted in human nature and its corresponding limits.

Those concerned about this issue would do well to study one of the most distinct 20th century proponents of small-scale economics, the political economist and social philosopher, Wilhelm Röpke. Born in Germany and educated in Marburg, Röpke spent most of his life in Geneva, where he became well known for his stern criticism of both socialism and Nazism. As a conservative republican, he was most willing to speak out against all forms of democratic imprudence, including the readiness to use inflation as a political tool. But he also regretted the frivolous ease with which European leaders seemed willing to bring their countries into an international organization like the European Community (EC). The larger an organization, in his view, the more likely it would breed intrigues and encourage lack of responsibility.

Born 1899 in the small town Schwarmstedt near the Lüneburg Moors, Röpke was a product of peaceful pre-war Europe. His father was a medical doctor and early pictures show a happy family with

good looking and intelligent children. According to Röpke, Schwarmstedt, with its vibrant civil society and sense of neighbourliness, was a pleasant place to live.

But the war came and towards its end Röpke was summoned to military duty. He served briefly in northern France where his diary entries described feelings of unease and powerlessness. The arbitrary routines and the ineffective military operations he witnessed shaped his subsequent critical attitude to large organizations in general.

Röpke saw the war and its horrible end as proof that, in vital respects, Wilhelmine Germany and the whole of pre-war Europe had failed. Although he at first viewed himself as a socialist, he gradually realized that European post-war reconstruction, in order to be spared new calamities, must follow other lines. Röpke later gained fame as an expert on spotting and handling business cycles. Although not a Keynesian, he recommended limited state interventions in the face of a threatening “secondary inflation,” since he regarded the latter as an omen of impending economic collapse.

As new forces in German politics swept democratic institutions aside, Röpke sensed that he must leave the country. He took up a position in Turkey and after some years as a professor in Istanbul he finally settled in Geneva in 1937. There, at the Graduate Institute of International Studies, he took it upon himself to educate and offer assistance to contemporaries who wanted to work actively against illiberal trends.

A noteworthy achievement, for which we owe him our deep gratitude, is how he fulfilled this task. While inspired by classical political economy and the Austrian School, Röpke understood the limitations of erecting new institutions in a free market. Specifically, he wanted to maintain an older framework of ethical culture as a counterweight to greed and in order to contribute to improved moral decisions.

In *A Humane Economy* (1960), Röpke writes: “As far as I myself am concerned, what I reject in socialism is a philosophy which, any ‘liberal’ phraseology which it may use notwithstanding, places too little emphasis on man, his nature, and his personality and which, at least in its enthusiasm for anything that may be described as organization, concentration, management, and administrative

machinery, makes light of the danger that all this may lead to the sacrifice of freedom in the plain and tragic sense exemplified by the totalitarian state”.

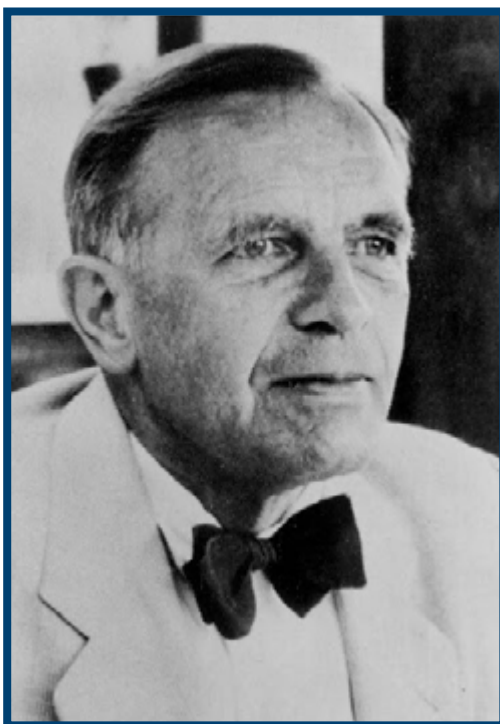
For Röpke, the pretention of socialism to direct an economy in the tiniest minutiae was a sign of hubris. A state can never gather so much information as an all-encompassing management of the market would demand. In empowering itself too much, it trusts the individual and intermediary communities too little. And in preventing people from developing their innate talents, it forces them to act against their nature — and even to make illegal shortcuts. Thus, while conceding the virtues of liberalism, Röpke at the same time rejected the doctrines of libertarianism. He regarded society as a set of connected parts —

a kind of cosmos — in the spirit of Aristotle, but behind which a living God acted. Although not Catholic himself, he felt a kinship with those who brought forth ideas in the spirit of Catholic social teachings. In fact, a schism would later arise in the economic forum that Röpke co-founded, the Mont Pelerin Society, because of his unwillingness to follow laissez-faire prophets like Ludwig von Mises to the ultimate consequence of their convictions.

Such a worldview likely stems from Röpke’s childhood. On the one hand, he valued the local market around Schwarmstedt with its small stores, workshops, farms, and manufactures, and also the way people interacted with them in a cooperative and friendly way. On the other hand, he perceived the fears and resentment besetting employees of large

German companies when the crisis of the 1920s unfolded.

As we read Röpke, it soon becomes clear that he distinguished between two outlooks and sought to explain how an economy develops by examining the underlying mindset. One is the modern, colossal attitude, expressing itself among political empire builders and large-scale industrialists. Extreme examples of this approach include Napoleon and Bismarck. They see ever-growing political units and large companies as desirable, and accept the ensuing uniformity, resentment, and boredom as unavoidable. The alternative aims at supporting economics on a small scale, encouraging local and regional entrepreneurs in their various settings. He saw its embodiment not least in the Swiss village



A portrait of a dapper Wilhelm Röpke.
Photograph courtesy of Felipe Melo.

which despite its smallness possessed remarkable variety and the opportunity for human fulfilment. While the distinction made is simplified here, it served to form Röpke's thought in his mature years.

The challenges that Röpke faced were formidable. His moment of triumph came, however, when his ideas were adopted by the men behind the German *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). Röpke was asked to give his views on the practical policies under consideration by the Adenauer administration and he was regularly invited to Bonn to comment upon the economic measures of the Christian Democrats. The Minister of Finance of the post-war Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Ludwig Erhard, no less, has testified to the importance of Röpke's ideas.

Röpke's early death in 1966 unfortunately ended an influential career as both a government adviser and esteemed opinion maker. His books, written in a beautiful, literary — if somewhat meandering — style were no longer so widely read. In the turmoil of the student rebellion of the 1960s, radical voices took over. When the neo-liberal 'renaissance' started in the late 1970s, Röpke's mild, nuanced message was in turn overshadowed by that of libertarians such as Milton Friedman.

How, then, is Wilhelm Röpke linked to Václav Havel, the eminent man of conscience and former president of the Czech Republic who was Röpke's junior by 37 years?

Havel was not an economist by profession. Originally educated as a natural scientist, he left his laboratory job to join a Prague theatre as a playwright. He then took an interest in politics and became active in the opposition to Czech communist rule. In this role he co drafted the liberal manifesto "Charter 77", jointly founded the Citizens' Forum, and finally was elected in 1989 as the first president of the new Czech Republic.

For Václav Havel, man's primary experience is his immediate world — that is, his most concrete, touchable surroundings. That life centres around his home and family, his neighbourhood, and in lucky cases, his workplace. He has written: "My home of course is also the country in which I live, the language I speak, the spiritual climate which prevails in my country and which is evoked by the language spoken there. Czech, the Czech way of perceiving

the world, the Czech historic experience, the Czech variety of courage and cowardice, the Czech sense of humour, all this constitutes an indispensable part of this layer of my 'home' ". In Havel's thought, priority is given to what he calls "natural life" or that which we take in from day to day by our senses — often in a personal and peculiar way. Havel believes that man's surroundings give him meaning and identity; when lost or cut off from them, his true self is endangered.

Today, Havel has cautioned, much threatens our microcosms. Media, films, papers, etc. force themselves upon us and rip the fabric of things which are known and dear to us. Unfortunately, many 'dream factories' remain ready to supply us with whatever products we may demand, whether based on boredom, wishful thinking, or naked consumeristic and imperialistic desires. Thus, we begin to float aimlessly in wider and wider circles, losing our foothold in the little issues of the day. Increasingly, we tend to nourish empty hopes and abstractions.

Among the factors contributing to this state of isolation, ideologies stand foremost. They answer a need to feel greater than we are, sometimes by exploiting secret impulses to defeat or at least neutralize our enemies. In due time they entirely take over our horizon. Here we face Havel's experience from a communist state which never cherished the small world in its true sense. While it raised insurmountable fences around its territory, stopping its citizens from even paying the briefest of visits abroad, it did not bother to make 'home' or the 'small world' a concern for the people it fenced in. Therefore, once the regime fell, people like Havel began to fight — not simply for freedom but for the right to have places where men could feel that they truly belong. 'Home', therefore, became a paramount concept to Havel; and it was a direct consequence of his life under communism.

The irony is that, in the meantime, democratic Europe in its own way had started to devalue the concept of 'home'. Europe, or at least the EC (and later the European Union), saw mobility as an inherent, primary value. Numerous borders and limits were eliminated, and competition between individuals, nations, and regions was given free reign.

When Václav Havel presents his vision for a new-born Czechoslovakia, he emphasises the value of 'home', normality, and respect for man's natural



Václav Havel in June 2006. *Photograph licensed under CCBYS.A2.5/Joe Bloggs.*

habitat. Obviously Havel does not perceive the wish for a ‘normal life’ as mere habit or a matter of convenience. It is deeply reflected upon and in fact carries his whole worldview. (Without dwelling here on his intellectual mentors, one can mention in passing the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka and his concept of ‘home’ which served to legitimize and strengthen Havel’s own thinking.)

A feeling of alienation, Havel notes, makes the politician’s task easier because he can treat citizens as a single large constituency, devoid of any local traits or personal needs. Into the void treads the technocrat, carrying with him the whole instrumentarium of modern opinion moulding and governing techniques. Collectivism, which in our own time was officially abandoned in favour of individualism, thus re-enters the public arena strengthened.

Havel says: “A modern politician is transparent. Behind his self-important masque and artificial language we face no true human being, no one which by his love, passion, inclinations, opinions, hatred, courage or cruelty is rooted in the order of the life world. All this he has locked up in his studio as something private. What we observe is a more or less skilled technician of power”.

The ‘unnatural’ nature of ideology in Havel’s eyes does not stop with politics, however. It makes itself felt in the most salient economic issues. So how then does Václav Havel regard economics? He sees the field as a legitimate concern for anyone who wants to contribute to a liberal — meaning a ‘normal’ and natural — society. He shuns the word ‘capitalism’, however, tainted as it is by misunderstandings and leftist critiques. Rather, he considers ‘market economy’ an acceptable term. The kind of ordering it denotes, in his view, is the most natural to the extent that it honours men’s autonomous wishes and personal inclinations. To earn one’s living by selling work and goods should not be impeded. Unbridled or *laissez-faire* variants must be avoided, though.

Havel’s hard-earned opinion is that doctrinaire views, whether from the left or right, destroy society. The problem of statesmanship is not ultimately how to create a legal framework that encourages wise decisions, but how best to contribute to an education and sentiments that make a peaceful, decentralised civil society possible. A state must be

entitled to set limits to regulate markets in the name of the commonweal. Prudence and statesmanship are needed. In a general way, Havel’s views recall Christian Democracy in its European sense; but in their philosophic and historic underpinnings, they draw on a small-scale liberal conservative like Wilhelm Röpke.

In their reflections on the modern crisis, both Röpke and Havel seem to be in close alignment. Röpke’s strength lay in his schooling in classical economics and an older, classical, and humanistic idiom which helped him spot and delineate the problems of having a powerful state. Havel’s gift was his ability to articulate and apply the philosophy of ‘home’.

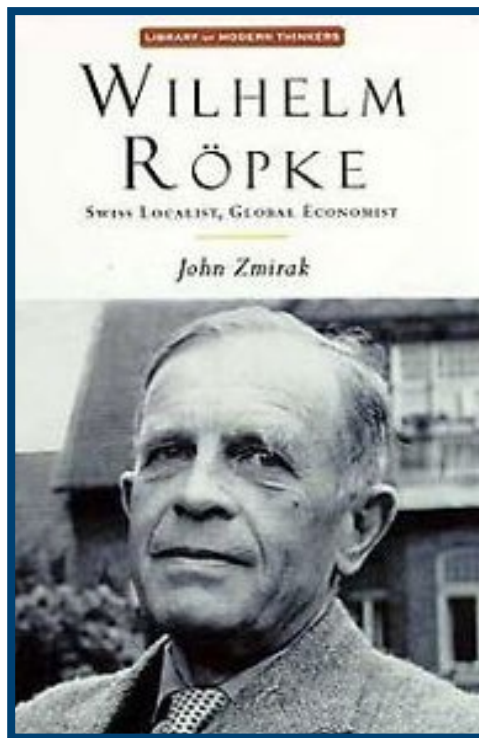
Despite their deep similarities, as far as I know no one has yet compared Röpke and Havel. This brief essay is but a sketch calling for such a study. The fact that the two thinkers had different professions and belonged to separate generations may, in part, explain this lack of scholarship. Additionally, Havel took a different path from Röpke, although the latter left regular academic life to give advice to several top politicians.

Yet the two are in many ways kindred spirits. Havel started from the vantage point of modern existential thought in its Czech variety, fruitfully adding to it a psychological insight that allowed him to advance a bit further on some issues than Röpke. Havel deepened the defence of ‘small-scale’ society and thus enabled modern men to grasp more fully the significance

of their own life experience. And both, of course, relied on the famous Burkean dictum of “the small platoon”.

So we have many reasons to learn from Václav Havel as well as from Wilhelm Röpke — especially now that large-scale economic arrangements, their underlying motives and values are being severely questioned, and many people are searching for viable alternatives. ■

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John Zmirak’s excellent profile of Wilhelm Röpke published in 2001.

Photograph courtesy of ISI.

Tradition & History in Burke

André P. DeBattista

Current trends in politics show that pragmatism often takes precedence over ideological concerns. Policies and programmes are based on measurable outcomes and budgeted figures. This gives citizens tangible and measurable methods which can be used to assess the performance of their governments.

Unfortunately, this new-found pragmatism has tended to eclipse strong principled arguments and political philosophy. Shorn of their conceptual or theoretical underpinnings, government policies become yet another market product to be evaluated through market surveys and voter polls, and sold during elections through public relations campaigns.

The erosion of political philosophy has deprived politics of any strong rationale which takes into account history, philosophy, and intellectual debates which shape our present. Thus, political thinkers have a lot to gain by rediscovering the works of Edmund Burke. The masterful 2013 biography, *Edmund Burke: Philosopher, Politician, Prophet*, by the Conservative British MP Jesse Norman provides a comprehensive look at Burke's understanding of politics and the author asserts that Burke's sobriquet as the 'father of conservatism' is justified. His significance, however, reaches far beyond the confines of conservative political thought.

Burke was born to an Anglo-Irish family on the January 12, 1729. He received his education at Trinity College, Dublin. At the age of 20, he moved to London to further his studies in law. There he focused on literary pursuits and politics. In 1765, he was elected as a Whig Member of Parliament. His parliamentary career spanned 29 years before his retirement in 1794.

Despite being a famed orator and a distinguished parliamentarian, Burke's political career was deemed by many to have been a failure. He only held political office as Paymaster of the Forces for just under two years; and he had to constantly find ways of securing patrons to sustain his literary and political career. But his greatness was based on the causes and the principles that he championed in the House of Commons.

Burke championed the cause of the American Colonies against the Stamp Act of 1765. And he later would speak out famously against the French Revolution which was rapidly destroying the fabric of French society. An underlying theme present in all his works and throughout his career concerned the limiting of arbitrary and over-reaching power — regardless of whether this was exercised by the King, the East India Company, or a revolutionary mob.

Burkean Conservatism

It is difficult to narrowly classify Burke's political thinking. His principles are generally described as being 'conservative'; yet he himself never used this term. The American conservative thinker Russell Kirk described him simply as the "founder of modern conservative thought". Yet in one of his seminal essays on Burke, "How dead is Edmund Burke?" (1950), Kirk questioned whether Burke's philosophy retains any relevance. He outlined some principles which he believed stood at the heart of Burke's political thought. These principles were largely derived from Burke's 1790 magnum opus, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, a classic which remains in print today.

Burke believed that an "eternal chain of duty linking great and obscure, living and dead" prevails in society. Thus, options are constrained by the experiences of the past and the expectations of future generations. Rulers cannot disregard the ruled and, in turn, citizens depend on those who

govern them to secure the social order. A social order is essential in any civilised society. Burke asserted that happiness is "to be found by virtue in all conditions". He stated that an excessive focus on equality may sometimes inspire "false ideas and vain expectations", which only serve to "aggravate and embitter that real inequality, which it never can remove". Burke also gave great prominence to the influence that custom and tradition exert. He displayed great scepticism of "sophisters, economists, and calculators", and asserted that "[p]olitics ought to be adjusted, not to human reasoning, but to human nature; of which the reason is but a part, and by no means the greatest part".



Edmund Burke in a portrait by Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) in the [National Portrait Gallery in London](#).

In economic terms, Burke believed that the right of an individual to own property and use it as he deemed fit was intrinsically linked to freedom. Economic redistribution for the purpose of economic levelling was similarly difficult and counter-productive. And, in the end, he asserted that 'equal rights' does not necessarily translate into 'equal things'.

Burke also made a very clear distinction between change and reform. Whilst change is desirable and necessary, reform is a drastic measure which could dramatically alter the order of things. Consequently, he was horrified by the French revolutionaries and their dismantling of some key institutions of French society. He believed these events were seditious and correctly prophesied that they would ultimately lead to great destruction.

Tradition & Institutions

Burke's fundamental distrust of the French Revolution and its aims were a result of his understanding of its philosophical underpinnings. The Enlightenment thinkers who inspired the Revolution asserted that reason always reigns supreme; and they argued that the best policies — and the best methods of governance — could be determined through rational and scientific reasoning. They were wary of traditional institutions and viewed them as a source of discontent. In contrast, Burke's vision of politics and governance gave a greater priority to history and tradition rather than rationality.

In his book, Norman takes into account the historical analysis provided by Burke in his unpublished "Essay towards an Abridgement of English History". In that work, Burke stressed that institutions exert more influence than individuals; thus, they are often far more important. He believed that habit, custom, and manner are distinct from law and may even be superior to reason. In other words, the historic past does not determine the present and the future; rather, it conditions them through the shaping of institutions.

The role of institutions is thus a key to understanding Burke. Enlightenment figures had asserted that the individual was supreme. Burke disagreed, building on the Aristotelian belief that man is a 'political animal' — that is, an individual who is intended to live in a social context. This context is defined by a social order which, in Norman's words, "links people together in an enormous and ever-shifting web of institutions, customs, traditions, habits, and expectations built up by innumerable interactions over many years".

Institutions can be established institutions such as the monarchy, the judiciary, and the apparatus of state, as well as the more informal institutions surrounding marriage, the arts, culture, faith, and education. These institutions give an emotional and personal rationale which ultimately direct individual reason.

The Modern Political Party

The modern political party is one of the lasting institutions which Burke helped to create and shape. While he cannot be credited with coining the word 'party', he did

make the case for the formation of solid political parties rather than political factions. He defined political parties as being "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle, in which they are all agreed".

Political parties bring about some stability among people because they are based on shared values, mutual commitment, and a certain degree of personal loyalty. This makes them the perfect vehicle to foster collective action. Such action may include generating support to pass difficult and complex legislation through parliament or championing certain policies both when the party is in power and when it is in opposition.

Parties can also be vehicles which help to preserve the coveted social order. They allow for a peaceful and orderly transition of power. Moreover, they can effectively address public discontent with the highest institutions of power. This can help avoid widespread unrest or even violent revolution — two elements which can lead to a collapse of the entire social order.

Burke Today

The brief comments above offer a small hint of Burke's overall significance. Norman's book, however, offers a much more detailed and impressive case for reigniting interest in this great political thinker. And he outlines some of the lessons derived from Burke's rich oeuvre which are still relevant to the current political milieu.

Firstly, Burke helps us realise that liberal individualism is in deep crisis. As Norman puts it: "various disasters have gravely undermined conventional beliefs in the moral primacy of the individual, in the power of human reason alone to resolve political and economic problems, in the redemptive value of individual consumption, and in the capacity of unfettered individual freedom to deliver personal or social well-being". The disasters of liberalism were largely a product of policy failures — a failure which could have been avoided by adopting a Burkean perspective.

Secondly, Burke also offers a relevant and undervalued model of political leadership — one centred around the preservation of the social order. Throughout his political career, Burke spoke consistently and eloquently about the dangers of the excessive and arbitrary use of power. The best antidote to abuse of power, he suggested, is a strong rule of law and representative government.

Finally, Burke's works provide us with a better understanding of the loss of value and social order and with some ideas of how to begin fostering its recovery. Naturally, the context which shaped his views is very different from our own, and one may not always agree with his analysis or his conclusions. Nevertheless, Burke continues to provide a valuable perspective on tradition, history, and the role of institutions in society which is worth discovering and applying to the challenges of today. ■

Mr. DeBattista is a political analyst. In 2013 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He is also a member of the Royal Institute of Philosophy.

What is Left?

Roger Scruton

No political thinker in the conditions of modern Europe and America can ignore the changes imposed on our intellectual life by the writers and activists of the left. Our understanding of men and society seems to have been transformed not once or twice but a hundred times, by the determined analysis of history and institutions undertaken in the name of socialist politics. No writer can entirely stop his ears to the arguments and exhortations that are yelled down at him from the 'commanding heights' of the moral and intellectual economy, and although it is now apparent that those heights were relinquished without a fight and remain inadequately defended, the importance of regaining them is not always recognized.

The upsurge of left-wing politics during the present century was heralded by a shift in the minority consensus among intellectuals. The new consensus was decisively to influence those members of the rising generation who would have the impetus and the conviction to devote themselves to the pursuit of power. In the long run such shifts of opinion matter and they have mattered disastrously. It is again necessary, I believe, to demonstrate the extent of the fraud that has been perpetrated in the name of the 'theoretical correctness' and the 'moral superiority' of socialism.

There is no doubt that, were it not for the high intellectual standing of such writers as Hill and Williams in England, Galbraith and Dworkin in America, Habermas, and Foucault on the European continent, the Left would possess little of its present credibility. And yet it seems to me that most that is interesting and true in such writers is detachable from the ideology that has provided their fashionable appeal.

The modern use of the term 'left' derives from the French *Estates-General* of 1789, when the nobility sat on the King's right, and the 'third estate' on his left. It might have been the other way round. Indeed, it was the other way round for everyone but the King. However, the terms 'left' and 'right' remain with us, and are now applied to factions and opinions within every political order. The resulting picture — of political opinions spread in a single dimension — makes sense only locally, and only in conditions of adversarial government. Moreover, even where it captures the outlines of a political process, it can hardly do justice to the theories which influence that

process, and which form the climate of opinion from which it is nourished. Why, therefore, use a single term — the word 'left' — to cover anarchists like Foucault, Marxist dogmatists like Althusser, liberals like Dworkin, and such sceptical satirists as Galbraith?

The reason is simple. Many of them have been associated with the movement which has called itself the New Left. Others form part of the broad ground of opinion from which the New Left rises on its stark unfriendly promontory. All have contributed to the formation, during the '60s and '70s, of an oppositional consensus. Under the influence of this consensus it ceased to be respectable to defend the customs, institutions and policy of Western states, and intellectuals suffered a renewed fit of tolerance towards the theory and practice of communism.

It should not be thought, however, that the New Left represents an unheralded departure. On the contrary, it is merely the most recent explosion of a force that has been prominent in politics since 1789. The left intellectual is typically a Jacobin. He believes that the world is deficient in wisdom and in justice, and that the fault lies not in human nature but in the established systems of power. He stands in opposition to established power, the champion of a 'social justice' that will rectify the ancient grievance of the oppressed.

At the same time, the intellectual of the New Left is a 'liberationist'. He desires social justice for the masses and emancipation for himself. The oppression that rules the world operates, he believes, both outwardly and inwardly. It binds the mass of mankind in chains of

exploitation, and at the same time generates a peculiar conscience, an inner bondage, which cripples and deforms the soul. The distinctive tone of voice of the New Left derives from an emotional synthesis. The new intellectual advocates the old idea of justice but believes justice to involve his own emancipation from every system, every 'structure', every inner constraint.

The moral importance of this synthesis is obvious. By joining the contemporary cry for 'liberation' to the old cause of 'social justice', the New Left speaks in the interests of humanity, even when most fervently bent on the release and aggrandisement of the self. And 'social justice' is a goal so overwhelmingly important, so unquestionably superior to the 'established interests' which stand against it, as to purify every action done in its name. The advocate of social justice rejoices unashamedly in the ardour of combat and if he finds himself in alliance



Maximilien François Marie Isidore de Robespierre (1758-1794), a member of the *Estates-General*, the Constituent Assembly, and the *Club des Jacobins* — and a "master of terror".

with fanatics, he may comfort himself that such is the ancient way of virtue.

It is important, in examining left-wing movements, to remember this purifying potential in the aim of 'social justice'. Many socialists are as sceptical towards utopian impulses as the rest of us; at the same time, having allied themselves beneath a moralizing banner they inevitably find themselves galvanized, inspired, and eventually governed by the most fervent members of their sect. For the politics of the Left is politics with a goal: your place within the alliance is judged by the lengths you are prepared to go on behalf of 'social justice'. Conservatism — or at least, conservatism in the British tradition — is a politics of custom, compromise, and settled indecision. For the conservative, political association should be seen in the same way as friendship: it has no overriding purpose but changes from day to day, in accordance with the unforeseeable logic of human intercourse. Extremists within the conservative alliance, therefore, are isolated, eccentric, and even dangerous. Far from being more deeply committed partners in a common enterprise, they are separated by their very purposefulness from those whom they seek to lead.

We should not be surprised, therefore, if left-wing movements, although constituted from a sensible rank-and-file, are so often led by fanatics. In 1794 Robespierre promised "to establish on earth the empire of wisdom, justice, and virtue", and his successors have rivalled him in the pomp and bathos of their claims. Rosa Luxemburg told her enemies that "the revolution

will rise resoundingly tomorrow to its full height and, to your consternation, will announce with the sound of all its trumpets: I was, I am, I shall be"; her comrade-in-arms Karl Liebknecht added that "we are fighting for the gates of heaven". Such grandiloquent sentiment persists in the writings of Marcuse and Fromm, but it is absent from other thinkers, or present only in muted form, bursting every now and then through the sunless prose of Habermas, Williams, and Anderson like a vision of distant fire. The pursuit of 'social justice' is no less uncompromising and the sense of enmity no less real. But the atmosphere has clouded. The army of the Left has retreated to its promontory, from where it calls down into the mists of modern politics obscure insults and mysterious incantations. Fanaticism thus takes a novel form. It seeks not to lead the masses but to conjure mysteries which will secretly achieve the common goal and so make leadership unnecessary.

Many writers are as certain as ever of the nature of this goal and for most of them 'social justice' requires 'socialism'. If they give no serious explanation of what they mean by socialism the defect is hardly new. Marx — who provided the perfect theory of oppression — dismissed all existing attempts to describe the institutions of socialist government as 'utopian'. In place of them he was content with a 'scientific socialism' that promised 'full communism' as its logical outcome. The 'historical inevitability' of this condition relieved Marx of the intellectual necessity to describe it. All we know is that, under communism, men will be equal, prosperous, and



The monstrous ideas of the New Left contributed to the counter-cultural revolution of the 1960s. Above is a relatively calm scene from the May 1968 student protests at the Sorbonne. *Photograph courtesy of nosocachorros.*

free. It is a singular feature of the left-wing mentality that such pronouncements suffice to quell its curiosity about man's ultimate purpose. And yet it is not only intellectual argument which suggests that freedom and 'equality' may not be compatible. Human history testifies to the fact and no history more tellingly than the history of Marxist socialism.

The writings of the New Left therefore show an anxious and defensive concern with history. Left-wing history has a 'hidden agenda': it wishes to show that history is inclined in a socialist direction. The 'forces of reaction' are frequently victorious but only because socialism has 'mobilized' them in their own defence. Moreover, socialism, despite its defeats, will eventually triumph, and then its promises will be fulfilled. The apparent cruelties and breakdowns are no more than local disturbances which, but for the 'forces of reaction', would not have occurred. Even now, left-wing intellectuals tell us that communist oppression is caused, not by communism, but by 'capitalist encirclement'. Not many go so far as Chomsky — who seems capable, from time to time, of denying everything, perhaps even the massacres of Pol Pot — but there is not a single thinker of the Left, so far as I can see, who is disposed to take responsibility for the cruelties that have been perpetrated in the name of his ideal, even though all are adamant that the cruelties of every ancien régime must be laid firmly at the door of those who would defend it.

Left-wing history is the expression of an embattled mentality, and it is only when we recognize this that we

can perceive its essential structure, as myth. It takes the heroic self-deception of a Beatrice Webb to travel in the dark world of communism and see nothing but light. But less talented intellects may still appropriate the past, and re-shape it in accordance with the necessary doctrine. The 'climate of treason' has been dispersed; yet the longing remains for a world-redeeming purpose, one that will establish at last the empire of 'social justice'. Those who try to draw attention to disquieting facts or who argue that 'social justice' may be intrinsically undesirable, are either ignored or vilified, and everything that has happened in recent decades to change the minds of uncommitted men has left the socialist mentality unaffected.

The moral asymmetry — the expropriation by the left of the entire store of human virtue — therefore accompanies a logical asymmetry, namely, an assumption that the onus of proof lies always with the other side. Nor is it possible for this onus to be discharged. Consider the theories of Marx. From their first enunciation these have awakened the liveliest controversy and it is unlikely that they should have remained undamaged. Indeed, it seems to me that all of Marx's theories have been essentially refuted: the theory of history by Maitland, Weber, and Sombart; the theory of value by Bohm-Bawerk, Mises, Sraffa, and many more; the theory of false consciousness, alienation, and class struggle by a whole range of thinkers from Mallock and Sombart to Popper, Hayek, and Aron. Not all those critics could be placed on the 'right' of the political spectrum, nor are



In August 1968, students occupied the 'Zocalo' in Mexico City. Such scenes were repeated around the world, thanks to the New Left. Today's hedonism, moral relativism, and intellectual cowardice are its legacy. *Photograph courtesy of Cel-ki.*

they all hostile to the ideal of ‘social justice’. Yet none of them, so far as I know, has been answered by the New Left with anything more persuasive than a sneer. This is not because the New Left regards classical Marxism as defunct and the continued discussion of its tenets otiose. On the contrary, the central Marxist claims recur constantly in the works of the writers whom I consider. And as a rule they are neither refined nor qualified but blankly assumed as the incontrovertible premises of social analysis.

The critic of left-wing doctrine is therefore compelled to reflect on his own position. If the writings of Weber, Sombart, Mallock, Hayek, Bohm-Bawerk, Mises, and Popper have made no impact whatsoever on the fundamental items of left-wing belief, how can he hope to make an impact? And how is he to respond to the assumption that he bears the onus of proof, when thinkers of such power and seriousness have been unable either to discharge the onus, or even to attract the attention of those whom they have sought to persuade?

The least that can be said is that we are not dealing with a system of rationally held beliefs. The important propositions of left-wing thought are precisely those which cannot be questioned. Marxism-Leninism, for example, claims that its fundamental beliefs have the status of science. Yet it is clear to any neutral observer that these beliefs have been placed beyond science, in a realm of absolute authority which can never be entered by the uninitiated. Marxists refer to this sanctified sphere of authoritative utterance not as belief or theory, but as praxis: doctrine has become inseparable from revolutionary action. Praxis is the Marxian equivalent of faith. It exists only when the veil of ignorance (‘false consciousness’) is torn away, in the final gesture of radical commitment.

Political scientists often borrow a term from Marx in order to describe this peculiarly modern phenomenon, of a doctrine which, while claiming scientific status, refuses to stand before the court of scientific evidence. Such a doctrine, they say, is ‘ideology’, and the modern literature abounds in theories of ideology — theories which endeavour to explain the human desire for beliefs which are at the same time scientific and unquestionable. Much of this literature is illuminating. Raymond Aron’s description of Marxism as a ‘secular religion’, Voegelin’s theory of ‘gnosticism’ as the original intellectual sin, Norman Cohn’s diagnosis of the millenarian tendency of

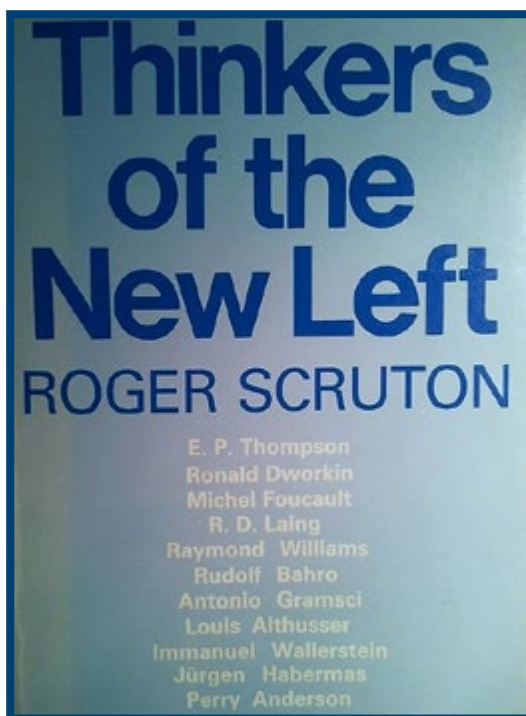
Marxist politics, and Oakeshott’s critique of the politics of goals — all those ideas must persuade us of the essentially deviant character of much Marxist doctrine.

However, ideology is no more than the by-product of Marxism, the instrument whereby it is translated into action, gathering its multitudes about an implacable cause. The terrifying *Schwärmerei* which has changed the political landscape of our planet is a phenomenon that we must try to understand. But a mass movement is distinct from the ideas which inspire it; and ideas which are received as ideology may yet be supported by reasoned argument — as is the case with classical Marxism.

Few thinkers of the New Left swim in those ‘main currents’ of Marxism which have been so lucidly charted by Kolakowski. Most of them were unknown before the campus revolution of the sixties and all of them should be understood in the light of that revolution, to which they supplied useful intellectual fuel. The conditions which prevailed in 1968 provided a novel ground for revolutionary sentiment. Universities were filled by a generation that had grown to maturity without the experience of war and whose ancestors had, for the most part, known little education. They attained this novel privilege in circumstances of affluence and expansion, when the last vestiges of traditional restraint were destroyed or crumbling. Nothing is more remarkable than the

enthusiasm with which this new audience welcomed the most mediocre, tedious or ignorant of thinkers, provided he struck some chord of radical sympathy. The commentator of the future, looking back at the neglected works of Habermas, Williams, and Althusser, will find it difficult to believe that these leaden paragraphs once captured the hearts and minds of thousands, and formed the basic reading matter of university courses in the humanities and social sciences throughout the European diaspora. Yet if he has patience, he will discover the reasons for the appeal of such writers to a generation which had been nurtured on the promise of ‘social justice’. The students of the sixties and seventies, drawn from every social class, improperly educated, and severed by their ignorance from the history and culture of their ancestors, were impatient for doctrine. And the doctrine had to conform to the two needs which stirred in them: it had to promise, in one and the same gesture, both individual liberation and social justice for the mass.

The message of the New Left was simple. All power in the world is oppressive and all power is usurped.



Cover of the first edition (1985) of Scruton’s *Thinkers of the New Left*.

Photograph courtesy of the Editors.

Abolish that power and we achieve justice and liberation together. The new generation was not disposed to ask the fundamental question: the question how social justice (understood according to some egalitarian paradigm) might be reconciled with liberation. It wished only for the authoritative assurance that would validate its parricide and received that assurance from the dirge-like incantations of the Left. The new thinkers turned attention away from the difficult task of describing the socialist future to the easy holiday of destruction. They made fury respectable and gobbledegook the mark of academic success. With the hasty expansion of the universities and polytechnics, and the massive recruitment of teachers from this over-fished and under-nourished generation, the status of the New Left was assured. Suddenly whole institutions of learning were in the hands of people who had identified the rewards of intellectual life through fantasies of collective action, and who had seen the principal use of theory in its ability to smother the questions that would provide too sturdy an impediment to praxis. For such people the New Left was the paradigm of successful intellectual endeavour.

Several of the writers of the New Left are abject dunces; others are clever; at least one is a kind of genius. Their influence in no way corresponds to their intellectual merit, and whoever wishes to become acquainted with the

intellectual landscape of the sixties and seventies must perforce cover vast tracts of infertile territory, and hurry from the few sparse oases unrefreshed.

If only two thinkers are remembered as the leading representatives of youthful rebellion — Chomsky and Marcuse — it is because they exhibit so copiously and effectively the mendacity from which that rebellion grew. Chomsky manipulated facts, deliberately concealing all that is terrible in communism and all that is creditable in his own chosen homeland. Marcuse, who had even greater cause for gratitude towards America, manipulated not facts but language, describing as ‘repressive tolerance’ the virtuous refusal to put an end to his lies. But the climate of opinion today has changed — and few people are disposed to take note of thinkers whose language displays their indifference to truth so blatantly. ■

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Reflections on Conservatism

Andreas Kinneging

Being a conservative in Europe means having to explain, justify, and defend yourself to other people on a daily basis. Often this no fun at all — for instance, when one is accused in the press of wanting to overthrow the government, as happened to some of us a few years ago.

Such accusations are so silly that I really don't know how to reply. But there is also a positive side to having to defend yourself all the time: it forces you to think through your beliefs and convictions, and thus constitutes a vigorous impulse to educate yourself.

Since most people these days have little interest in fundamental principles and general ideas, the accusations made against conservatives are usually about specific political issues. I am sure that you all have had the same experience. For example, in the past few years I have been asked what I, as a conservative, have thought about the war in Iraq, gay marriage, the European Constitution, the inclusion of Turkey in the European Union, the role of Islam in the West, the Kyoto Protocol, the causes of unemployment and poverty, etc.

How should one go about answering such questions? First of all, one should avoid thinking that one can — or ought to — provide the right answer to all the specific issues people ask about. It is very

flattering of course. But we should try not to let our vanity get the upper hand and say things we might later regret. Remember that a wise man once said that the difference between him and other men was that he knew that he knew very little. His message, of course, was that we ought to carefully think things through before we express an opinion — otherwise we not only risk making ourselves look ridiculous but we also damage the cause for which we stand.

Second, when we finally decide that we have pondered over a question sufficiently to be able to answer it with some authority, we must always first provide the caveat that the answer is merely *a* — not *the* — conservative answer. For, as we all know, we simply do not have the conservative answer to many questions. Take for instance the war in Iraq. What was the conservative position on that issue? Should we have been in favour of it or against it? And what was the conservative view on Guantanamo Bay? It should be obvious that conservatives differ amongst themselves, so no one should think that he can provide *the* conservative view. So let us resist the temptation to call everyone who disagrees with us on a topic a ‘heretic’ or not a ‘real’ conservative. No one is infallible and the so-called heretic just might have a point.

I hasten to add that what I am saying does not in any way entail a sceptical and nominalist conclusion that there is and can be no such thing as conservatism. Every horse is unique, but all horses, whatever their

differentia specifica, belong to the same genus: each and every one is a horse. Might that not be the case with conservatives as well? What we should try to do then is to determine and define — or at least describe — not wherein conservatives differ from each other, their *differentia specifica*, but wherein they are all conservatives. What makes them all conservatives? We need to go after the characteristics of the genus.

The Conservative Genus

But is there such a thing as a conservative genus? Can we determine what a man must definitely think and believe so as to be legitimately called conservative? Can we ascertain some invariable core convictions of conservatism, which must be shared by anyone aspiring to be a conservative? A true sceptic and nominalist would, of course, argue that this is impossible. But I think he would be wrong. There are, indeed, a few core convictions that every conservative is bound to share — not on the level of specific political issues, to be sure, but on the level of fundamental principles and general ideas. It is there that one will find the persistent core of the conservative persuasion.

What is this persistent core? What principles and general ideas are we talking about? The shortest way to sum them up is to refer, like Leo Strauss, to two cities: Athens and Jerusalem; or to refer, like Edmund Burke, to two spirits: the spirit of the gentleman and the spirit of religion. The two thinkers, though using a different idiom, had exactly the same thing in mind. Burke's spirit of the gentleman is precisely what Strauss meant when he referred to Athens. And Burke's spirit of religion is the exact equivalent to Strauss' Jerusalem.

Athens and Jerusalem; the spirit of the gentleman and the spirit of religion: What do these short expressions stand for and what do they portend? They stand for two intellectual and moral traditions: on the one hand, the poetry, drama, oratory, historiography, and philosophy of the ancient Greeks and Romans; and on the other hand, the Christian view of man and the world, anchored in the Bible, particularly in the Gospels and the letters of Paul, expounded upon in later centuries by theological luminaries such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and many others. It is these two intellectual and moral traditions that have, in combination, by and large shaped Western civilisation.

Thus, conservatism is in essence nothing but the defence and vindication of these traditions against other, conflicting intellectual and moral traditions — a defence and vindication that is driven by the conviction that the ideas and ideals that these two traditions stand for are the best ever discovered. They fathom most deeply the human condition and provide man with the most accurate conception of his true needs — and thus of what must be striven for and what must be shunned so as to lead a truly good life.

Ecco conservatism. Of course, this description is still rather abstract and vague, and needs to be fleshed out. I must say a bit more about what ideas and ideals

the two traditions stand for. But before I do that, let us turn our attention to the conflicting intellectual and moral traditions I mentioned, against which conservatives defend Athens and Jerusalem: the spirit of the gentleman and the spirit of religion.

The principal conflicting traditions are liberalism and socialism. There is undeniably much truth to this statement. The words 'conservative' and 'conservatism' go back to the early 19th century and were coined to mark off a position in opposition to both liberalism and socialism. Conservatives have vigorously fought the tenets of both ideologies over the past two centuries. Happily, one of these traditions — socialism — has weakened, except in a few out of the way places like North Korea, the jungles of South America, and the halls of academe. Liberalism, on the other hand, is still alive and kicking. In fact, it has become the predominant worldview in the West.

But I will not go into the topic of liberalism any further. I believe that neither liberalism nor socialism are conservatism's real antagonists. The real antagonists are other, more profound philosophies, of which liberalism and socialism are mere practical, political offshoots. What I have in mind is the Enlightenment and Romanticism.

The Enlightenment

There seems to me to be a lot of confusion among conservatives about how to judge the Enlightenment. Burke's *Reflections* were obviously directed not only against the French Revolution, but also and especially against the thought of the French Enlightenment thinkers, which had caused the Revolution in his eyes. As a consequence, conservatives from the days of Burke until today commonly have a negative view of the French Enlightenment. When it comes to an evaluation of the Enlightenment in general, however, very few conservatives would regard themselves as its opponent. On the contrary: they tend to see themselves as against the French but in favour of the Scottish and American Enlightenment. The Scottish Enlightenment — that is to say, the thought of men like David Hume, Adam Smith, and Adam Ferguson; and the American Enlightenment — meaning the thought of the Founding Fathers, like James Madison, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson.

This way of looking upon the Enlightenment is not very enlightening, to say the least. To begin with, the differences between the various so-called Enlightenment thinkers are frequently huge. Hume and Ferguson had very little in common; neither did Adams and Jefferson. The differences become even greater when we compare thinkers from different countries with each other. There is very little that Adam Smith shares with Thomas Jefferson, let alone with Voltaire or Diderot. Why should we call these men Enlightenment thinkers in the first place — merely because they lived and wrote in the second half of the 18th century? That does not seem a good criterion to me.

To get a more accurate picture of the Enlightenment we should begin by freeing ourselves from the idea that everyone writing in the second half of the 18th century was, therefore, an Enlightenment thinker. Further, we should also reject the idea that the Enlightenment was something that occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. For what occurred in the second half of the 18th century under the name of Enlightenment was essentially nothing more than a popularization of the revolution in intellectual and moral thought brought about more than a century before by two Britons, a Frenchman, and a Dutchman. I am talking of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, and Baruch de Spinoza. These are the real ‘Fathers of the Enlightenment’. To understand the basic convictions of the Enlightenment one must turn to them.

What Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, and Spinoza share above all is the belief that, with the exception of Euclidean geometry, almost everything the Ancients and the Christian Middle Ages had brought forward — especially regarding man and the world — should be disposed of because it was all nonsense. This meant that the intellectual and moral traditions described earlier — harking back to Athens and Jerusalem, expressing the spirit of the gentleman and the spirit the religion — should be disposed of because they were absurd. They were convinced that a completely new intellectual start had to be made in order to make sense of things. And that is precisely what they did in their works: start anew. Thus, what we encounter in the philosophy of Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, and Spinoza is an unprecedented, out-and-out break with the Western intellectual tradition.

Not surprisingly, thinkers within these traditions reacted quickly, recognizing the danger posed by the new and revolutionary ideas of the four men. Think of writers like Blaise Pascal in France and the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth in England. This, it seems to me, is the real hour of birth of conservatism. We should not date it back to somewhere around the end of the 18th century or the beginning of the 19th century when Burke wrote his philippic and when the words ‘conservative’ and ‘conservatism’ were devised. Instead, we should go back to the period between 1650 and 1670 when the first books to self-consciously defend the tradition of Athens and Jerusalem against the new Enlightenment thinking appeared.

Let me interject that alternatively, one might also say, of course, that conservatism, being the vindication of the traditions of Athens and Jerusalem, has existed ever since these traditions came into being. That is, at least since the fifth century before Christ and the first century after Christ respectively. In that view, all that changed around 1650 is that conservatism acquired a formidable new enemy. However that may be, it seems to me to be definitively wrong to let conservatism begin with Burke.

Let us go back to the Enlightenment now and ask ourselves what conservatives have from its beginning

found so objectionable in it. For the sake of brevity and clarity, I will limit myself to a short discussion of one important point: the idea, already mentioned, that almost everything that has been thought and said in the past is silly and false. Conservatism has always rejected that idea. That is not to say that everything that has been thought and said was marvellous and true. Pre-Enlightenment natural science in particular, based largely on Aristotle and Ptolemy, was obviously wrong in many ways. Due to the techniques provided by the Enlightenment thinkers — such as calculus, the resolute-composite method, and the carrying out of controlled experiments — in combination with the basic ontological idea that the world merely consisted of matter in motion, our knowledge of physical nature has increased substantially. Thus, with regard to the natural sciences, the idea that, starting with the Enlightenment, we have made great progress in our knowledge and we will continue to do so in the future is surely justified.

But does that mean that everything that has been thought and said in the past is asinine, because it is not the result of following the techniques and basic ontological ideas of the natural sciences? It is the *proton pseudos* of the Enlightenment to believe that that is indeed the case. It has conjured up what Burckhardt has called *le terrible esprit de nouveauté*, that regards everything that has been achieved in the past as backward, retarded, childish, wrongheaded, narrow-minded, prejudiced, discriminatory, oppressive, and irrational. An *esprit* that believes that change — in jargon: innovation — is by definition an improvement and therefore ‘good’. There is no need to dwell at great length on the destruction this belief has wrought. Suffice it to say that its consequences are manifold and terrible, and it is undoubtedly one of the principle reasons why you and I have become conservatives.

Among the principle victims of this belief are the great traditions of moral and political thought, deriving from Athens and Jerusalem. The Enlightenment thinkers, after having shoved them aside, set out to develop new and better views of morality and politics. However, after several centuries of trying, we cannot escape the conclusion that these new and better views have turned out to be a failure. They are at best utilitarian, but tend to drift towards nihilism. Which is hardly surprising, given the fact that from an Enlightenment perspective, taking the natural sciences as the standard of knowledge, morality cannot be grounded on anything else than subjective preference.

From the beginning, conservatives have opposed this terrible *esprit de nouveauté*. “We know”, says Burke, “that we have made no discoveries, and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born”. If you want to understand morality and politics, Burke is saying, study Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca, Augustine, and Aquinas — that is to say, return to Athens and Jerusalem. What you will

find there is a much richer, truer and wiser picture of the human condition than that provided by the various Enlightenment thinkers.

Now, keeping this in mind, let us take another look at the Scotsmen and Americans we discussed earlier, often considered Enlightenment thinkers. It is evident to all who know their works that they are indebted most of all to the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They stand in the classical tradition. They are Athenians, so to speak, and are hence part of the conservative tradition. So why call them Enlightenment thinkers? That merely causes confusion.

On Romanticism

Let me now turn to that other great enemy of conservatism: Romanticism. Some of you might be surprised that I place it alongside the Enlightenment as conservatism's great enemy. It is an opinion one doesn't encounter often. In fact, outside the fields of art history, literary history, and music history one hears very little of Romanticism. That is remarkable, because many of the moral and political scourges of the modern world originate with the Romantics, at least as many as originate in the Enlightenment.

The origins of Romanticism are often said to lie in Germany in the first decades of the nineteenth century. But, again, I have to say that this is not entirely correct. In the first decades of the nineteenth century Romanticism was popularized by a great number of, particularly German, writers, but its origins go back to the second half of the eighteenth century, to the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Johann Gottfried von Herder. Before them, the Italian Giambattista Vico had already articulated many of the ideas central to Romanticism.

It seems to me that what Rousseau says, in one of the first sentences of his *Confessions* (1765), sums up marvellously what Romanticism is all about. What he says there is this: "I am made unlike anyone I have ever met. I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world. I may be no better, but at least I am different". This difference principle is at the heart of Romanticism.

Romanticism was at bottom a radical reinterpretation of reality. The romantic notion of reality is the exact antipode of the one prevalent in the Enlightenment. Now, peculiarity, singularity, uniqueness, and incomparability are the defining marks of being, and uniformity, invariability, universality, timelessness, its opposite, its denial. Truth can still be found, but it is no longer the one and only everlasting truth, valid irrespective of time and place. The truth is historicized, individualized, subjectivized.

It follows that being true to the 'truth' means being different — thinking, feeling, and perceiving differently (in other words, being original, an artist, a creator). Romantic man is potentially a creator, *ein Schöpfer*. He can think of new things, unthought of before. In this he is divine, much more than a mere creature, *ein*

Geschöpf. In this he is not only part of creation, but he takes part in creating. In being a creator he shapes the world according to his image. Ontologically, this entails that the self has a transcendental status. It is something active, primal, determining rather than being determined by the outside world, moulding man's experience, rather than being moulded by it. Kant was of course one of the first to draw this conclusion, but his conclusions did not even nearly exhaust all the new vistas made possible by the notion of man as a creator.

If we now apply these ideas to the realms of morals and politics some interesting implications become visible. To act morally right means being true to one's uniqueness and originality — that is, to be authentic. Only the impulses of the authentic will are to be taken into account, not what others will, and not what "the other inside of" us wills. That is what constitutes truthfulness.

The concept of truthfulness is obviously much older, but its meaning shifted fundamentally with the Romantics. Whereas truthfulness used to denote accordance with the facts of the world, it now began to signify accordance with the self. Truthfulness no longer depends on whether a statement fits the facts, but whether the person who utters it 'really means' what he says. Whether it is really his view thus replaces the question whether his view is a correct view. What counts most is that man is really 'committed' to his expressed views. More generally, what counts is 'to be oneself' — i.e. to let only the self-determine one's acts. To be yourself, in this sense, is what constitutes autonomy, independence, true freedom. A man whose acts are not means of self-expression but merely ways to please others — "inside the breast or outside" — is a hypocrite, a philistine, a slave.

The writer who popularized these ideas in the English speaking world, and hence, because of its global predominance, in the whole world, was J.S. Mill. Without going into this at length, let me just remind you of the plea in chapter three of *On Liberty* (1859), aptly entitled "Of Individuality", against traditions and customs as something unsuitable to the uncustomary individual, to the person of genius. And I call to mind his plea for "experiments in living" by the individual, as a principal ingredient of human happiness and individual and social progress.

What does all this lead to? That is no mystery. Its principal effect is a complete relativism, not only with regard to good and evil, but also with regard to truth and untruth — the results of which we see around us every day. First, it does away with the idea that we can and should learn from parents, teachers, elders, and forefathers. After all, everything thought and said is merely a subjective point of view. As a result a new primitivism rules, one that portends disaster for human civilization. And second, it destroys one's spiritual defences in the face of evil. After all, what is evil but a subjective point of view? What is evil for you may be good for me, and what is evil for me may be good for you.

Let us now return to conservatism. Again, just like in the 17th century, conservatives were quick to recognize the danger posed by the new ideas. In fact, the first to recognize the danger were the Romantics themselves, many of whom became conservative later in life. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel provides us with the foremost example of this ‘u-turn’. Although he never managed to free himself entirely from the Romantic mind-set, he became one of the first and best critics of the Romantic cult of the self.

Hence, conservatives since Hegel’s days have aimed their arrows not only at the Enlightenment, but also and to the same degree at Romanticism. It seems to me that today, in the early twenty-first century, the Enlightenment and Romanticism are still conservatism’s main antagonists. The various kinds of socialism that conservatives have fought for so long were the offspring either of Romanticism or of the Enlightenment, and often had a little of both, as is usual with offspring. This is true for the various kinds of liberalism conservatives still fight today. We’d better keep that in mind. One can fight one’s enemies effectively only if one knows what moves them, deep down.

Athens & Jerusalem

Now, let me round off by making a few brief observations about what conservatism sets against the Enlightenment and Romanticism, what it wants to defend, what its *parti pris* is: Athens and Jerusalem, the spirit of the gentleman and the spirit of religion. The richness of the subject prohibits setting out all its treasures, but I will try to provide one or two clues and suggestions. First I will say something about the relationship between Athens and Jerusalem, and then conclude with a few remarks about what Athens and Jerusalem had to say about the nature of man, a topic crucial to any serious worldview.

What is the relationship between Athens and Jerusalem, between the spirit of the gentleman and the spirit of religion, between ancient Greek and Roman thought on the one hand and Medieval Christian thought on the other? There are those who say that the relationship is characterized by tension. Thus seen, Athens and Jerusalem differ fundamentally from each other. They are basically antithetical.

This view has a long history. It goes back to Tertullian and, according to some, to St. Paul who says in 1 Corinthians 3:19, “the wisdom of this world is folly with God”. In the 20th century it has famously been defended by writers as diverse as Leo Strauss and Karl Barth.

If this view were correct, it would of course become very difficult to think of conservatism in the singular, as one identifiable intellectual and moral tradition. The best we can do in this case is to speak of two different conservatisms: a philosophical one and a religious one. Two different conservatisms that may unite and fight together against common enemies, but which are essentially at odds with each other and

doomed to fly at each other’s throats as soon as the common enemy is gone.

That would follow, if this view were correct. However, I believe that it is wrong. Most of the church fathers, who created Christian orthodoxy, were ancient philosophers as well. It is impossible to clearly separate Athens from Jerusalem in their work. Take Augustine for example. Undoubtedly a very Christian author. But Augustine is just as evidently a Platonist. For those who know their Plato, he, or rather his disciple Plotinus, is all over the pages of Augustine. Or take Thomas Aquinas — also a very Christian author. To him the Bible is *auctoritas* number one. But at the same time his indebtedness to Aristotle is huge. Or take the *New Testament* itself, the most sacred book of Christianity. To anyone versed in Greek philosophy, it is obvious that the ideas and ideals presented in the *New Testament* resemble those of the Greek philosophers in many ways, for instance in their emphasis on the inner goodness and virtue of the soul instead of the outer conformity of the human act to the law.

Some have refused Aquinas the title of ‘Christian’, because of the influence of Aristotle on his thought. That is silly. For by the same token one would have to refuse Augustine that title, given the influence of Platonic philosophy. Yes, one would even have to say that the Gospel itself is insufficiently Christian (which is, of course, madness).

Hence, the only true view on the relation between ancient and Christian thought is that, particularly the tradition of Platonism, but also other strands of Greek philosophy, such as Aristotelianism and Stoicism, are in many ways very close to the spirit of the Gospel. Moreover, Christianity, as we know it, is a result of a coming together of these two sources of ancient philosophy and the Gospel in the mind of the church fathers. Therefore, Christianity cannot be separated from ancient philosophy. Athens cannot be separated from Jerusalem. Ever since they came together, they have become one tradition, at least in the West. And this is the conservative tradition, or, if you like, the point of departure for the conservative tradition.

The Nature of Man

At the heart of every conservative anthropology we find the conviction that man is not by nature good. On the contrary, he is by nature in many ways wicked and deprived. He may not be a devil, but he is also far from being an angel. He is inclined more towards evil than towards good. But he is not doomed to be evil. He can change, although with difficulty, and he can never be entirely sure of his victory over the evil within him. For man, it is easy to be evil, and hard to be good.

Some people would argue that this view is typically Christian, and that it has little in common with how the Ancients conceived of man. I think these people are wrong. The Ancients had a very similar vision. Around 700 B.C. the Greek poet Hesiod already wrote, in a verse often quoted by posterity, that “badness can be

got easily and in shoals: the road to her is smooth, and she lives very near us. But between us and goodness the gods have placed the sweat of our brows: long and steep is the path that leads to her". And what to think of the story of Heracles at the crossroads, recounted three centuries later, by Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*. It is the story of Heracles who is sitting at a crossroads, perplexed about what road to take. Two ladies come up to him from the two roads, one very fleshy and soft, prettied up and in sexy clothes, the other modest and pure. The fleshy one, reaches Heracles first and tries to convince him to take her road, because it is the most pleasant and the easiest. "You will not miss the taste of any delight", she promises him. Heracles, after hearing these things, says: "Woman, what is your name?" To which the answer is: "My friend call me happiness, but those who hate me nickname me vice".

What exactly is vice, badness or evil? There are many different ways in which this question has been discussed and can be discussed. For now, let me point out one way of talking about evil, which has helped mankind for ages to get into focus what it means: the theory of the seven root sins, also named the seven deadly sins, or the seven cardinal vices: *superbia* (pride, in the sense of conceit), *avaritia* (greed), *luxuria* (lust), *ira* (anger), *gula* (gluttony), *invidia* (envy), and *acedia* (lack of concern).

Each and every human being is ridden with these sinful impulses, and from these seven spring many other sinful impulses (such as cruelty). If we give in to them and let them dominate us, we will wreak havoc and make our lives and those of other people solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. In fact, as Burke said, "History consists for the greater part of the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal, and all the train of disorderly appetites, which shake the public with the same troublous [sic] storms that toss the private state and render life unsweet". Hence, the sinfulness or viciousness of human nature is not just some problem amongst many others, it is the problem of human existence, privately and publicly.

Again, there are people saying that this is a typically Christian way of seeing it. And that the Ancients thought very differently. Again I disagree. It is true that the exact list of the seven deadly sins as we know it is a Christian creation. One finds it first in the book *Moralia in Job*, authored by Pope Gregory the Great around 600 A.D. But the Ancients knew them all, discussed them all, and rejected them all, or almost all. Even the list as we have it is found almost in its entirety in an ancient writer: to wit in Horace's Letters. The only difference is that where Gregory has *superbia*, Horace has *amor laudis*, the love of being praised.

So if all conservatives agree that the sinfulness or viciousness of human nature is the problem of human existence, the question arises what can we

do about it? As I said before, conservatives believe that man is not doomed to be evil. He can change, although with difficulty, and although he can never be sure of his victory over the evil within him. Man can turn around, discard his evil ways, and become good, at least to a certain extent. This is what the central Platonic notion of *periagogè* and the central Biblical notion of *metanoia* are about: both signify a turning around, a conversion from evil to good.

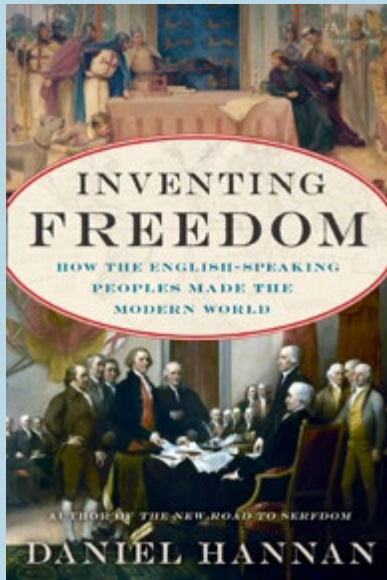
Much has been made about the supposed difference between the Ancients and Christianity with regard to this turning around or conversion. According to some the Christian turning around is a consequence of God's grace, whereas the ancient turning around is a consequence of human virtue. Again, I disagree. Anyone who believes that the Ancients put their whole trust in human virtue, should reread Plato's allegory of the cave. He will see that Plato speaks of the turning around towards the light in the passive tense. If fact, the person concerned is being dragged out of the cave by force, against his will. On the other hand, those who believe that Christians have put all their faith in grace, and reject all efforts by man of to be virtuous, should reread any Christian author they like, and they will find that all of them expect very strenuous moral efforts indeed of every Christian.

Since grace is God's business and prerogative, it suffices to say a few words about human virtue only. For the conservative tradition, virtue is the answer of man to vice, to sin, to the evil within us. A good life, individually and collectively, privately and publicly, is a virtuous life. To lead a good life an individual needs to be virtuous. A good society is unthinkable without virtuous members. Even the most optimal combination of market and government institutions will not produce a good society, if virtue is lacking in its members.

How is virtue acquired? To the extent that it lies in our hands: by a good education. These are the most central insights of the conservative tradition. But if the West ever forgets them entirely, Western civilization — which has already deteriorated substantially under the influence of the doctrines of the Enlightenment and Romanticism — will surely come to an end. So let us work as hard as we can to assure that this will never happen. ■

Prof. Kinneging is a professor at the Law School of the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. His 2006 book, Geografie van goed en kwaad. Filosofische essays (The Geography of Good and Evil), was translated into English and published in 2009 by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. His doctoral dissertation, in English titled Aristocracy, Antiquity and History: Classicism in Political Thought, was published by Transaction Publishers in 1997. He is a founder of the Center for European Renewal and former President of the Vanenburg Meeting. This article is an abridgement of a lecture he gave in 2008. It has been modified and re-published with kind permission from the author.

Briefly Noted



Inventing Freedom: How the English-Speaking Peoples Made the Modern World

by Daniel Hannan

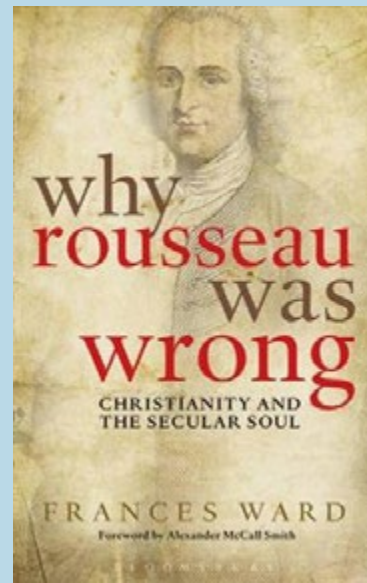
New York: Broadside Books, 2013 (416 pp.)

In this book, Hannan — a Conservative Member of the European Parliament — considers the English ideas and principles that were transported to the US in the 18th century and which have since spread around the world, creating ‘spheres’ of economic and political liberty. These ideas include private property, individual rights, representative government, the rule of law, and the common law tradition.

In a recent column, Hannan wrote: “We are still experiencing the after-effects of an astonishing event. The inhabitants of a damp island at the western tip of the Eurasian landmass stumbled upon the idea that the government ought to be subject to the law, not the other way around. The rule of law created security of property and contract, which in turn led to industrialisation and modern capitalism. For the first time in the history of the species, a system grew up that, on the whole, rewarded production better than predation.

Why did it happen? Why, after thousands of years of oligarchy and tyranny, did a system evolve that lifted the individual above the tribe rather than the reverse? How did that system see off rival models that elevated collective endeavour, martial glory, faith and sacrifice over liberty and property? How did the world come to speak our language?” This eloquent book sets out to consider these questions.

Hannan graduated from Oriel College, Oxford, and worked as a journalist and speechwriter before entering politics. His first book, *The New Road to Serfdom: A Letter of Warning to America*, was published in 2010. ■



Why Rousseau was Wrong: Christianity & the Secular Soul

by Frances Ward

London: Bloomsbury, 2013 (249 pp.)

The book’s author, Reverend Dr. Frances Ward, may seem suspect as she was one of the first women ordained a priest of the Church of England in 1994. But this examination of the crises of contemporary society is worth a look, as it examines the influence of radical individualism, utilitarianism, and ‘identity politics’. Many of these, says Ward, can be traced directly back to the Enlightenment and, specifically, to thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Why Rousseau? Because he represents the worst aspects of the Enlightenment: secularism, rationalism, and liberal egalitarianism. By dismissing the idea that human beings were inherently flawed and perpetuating the myth of the *bon sauvage*, his ideas helped undermine the influence of Christianity. (Ward even suggests, “Rousseau’s romantic notions fuelled the [London] riots of August 2011”.)

On occasion, Ward reveals her political bias, as when she criticises ‘Thatcherite conservatism’, which she sees stemming from ‘Rousseauistic ideas’ that have eroded social relations and undermined the ‘sense of community’.

Ward makes up for these occasional missteps by recognizing the lessons of Edmund Burke and the role of Christianity. In fact, it is Christianity that offers the best hope for undoing the damage done by Rousseau. Religious practices and rituals, she argues, not only help us build character, develop virtue, and escape our selfish individualism but have aesthetic, cultural, moral, and political impacts that can influence societies for the better — and towards the good. ■



**Der neue Tugendterror:
Über die Grenzen der Meinungsfreiheit in
Deutschland**

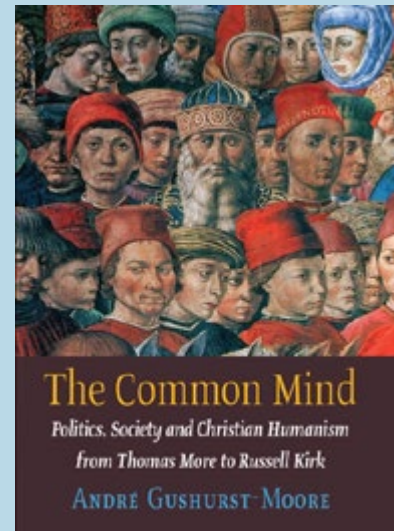
by Thilo Sarrazin

München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2014 (400 pp.)

Thilo Sarrazin is best known in Germany for publishing *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (*Germany Abolishes Itself*) in 2010 and *Europa braucht den Euro nicht* (*Europe Doesn't Need the Euro*) in 2012. Both were bestsellers, exasperating Germany's left-wing intelligentsia. In this book (*The New Terror of Virtue: On the Limits of Freedom of Speech in Germany*), he argues that despite freedom of speech guaranteed by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, there are limits to what can really be said.

To be sure, limits on freedom of speech can vary over time and from country to country. But today, he says, the media — and not just in Germany — is increasingly dominated by social scientists and so-called 'humanists' who act as self-appointed 'guardians of public virtue', punishing anybody who deviates from prevailing standards of acceptable opinion. Sarrazin discusses the most common of these 'acceptable' opinions: inequality is bad and equality is good; virtue is not important and competition is suspect; wealthy people should feel guilty about being rich; all cultures are inherently equal in worth and value; Islam is a religion of peace; the traditional family is obsolete (and children don't need a father and a mother); and that all human beings not only *have* equal rights but are *in fact* equal and should, therefore, be entitled to basic financial security provided by the state.

Sarrazin says freedom of speech only exists within narrow limits established by the 'guardians of virtue'. They control what is allowed and what is forbidden. As Sarrazin himself knows, going beyond these limits can have serious consequences: After criticising multiculturalism, Sarrazin was expelled from the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*), his wife lost her job, and his media appearances and lectures were cancelled. ■



**The Common Mind:
Politics, Society and Christian Humanism from
Thomas More to Russell Kirk**

by André Gushurst-Moore

Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2013 (264 pages)

In this wonderful book, André Gushurst-Moore, Director of Pastoral Care at Downside School in the U.K., explores the idea of "the common mind" by profiling the lives and works of twelve men of letters: Thomas More, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Henry Newman, Orestes Brownson, Benjamin Disraeli, G.K. Chesterton, T.S. Eliot, C.S. Lewis, and Russell Kirk. Each of these men embodied a purposeful recognition that literature matters, that the past is important, and that virtue should guide us. In their works, the author points out, they each embodied a tradition of ideas, thoughts, and insights going back centuries, speaking of qualities and values shared by men throughout history simply by virtue of their common humanity.

The 'common mind', the author explains, is really the mind that brings together and integrates the best of the classical, the medieval, and the modern worlds. It is, in short, "the mind of Europe". Its opposite is the "disintegrative mind", represented through the centuries by sophists, nominalists, sceptics, and today's cultural Marxist and deconstructionists.

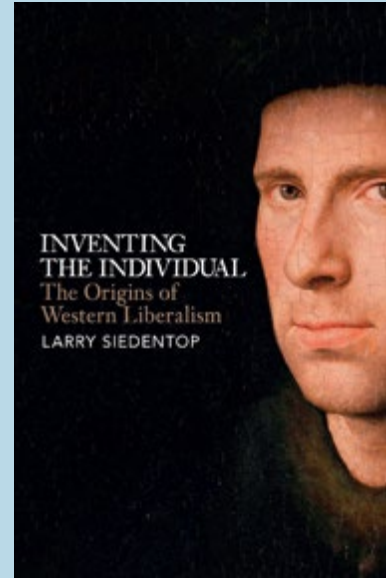
Despite the state of the humanities and our culture today, all is not lost. Each of the writers profiled in this book points the way towards "restoration and recovery", offering hope to those of us aware of living in a disintegrated and fragmented world.

While not a political book, it does touch on the impact of the humanities — especially literature and poetry — on the political realm, underscoring the great link between the humanely educated person, statecraft and civilisation, and inspiring the reader to defend the common mind and the great inheritance of the West. ■

**Inventing the Individual:
The Origins of Western Liberalism**

by Larry Siedentop
London: Allen Lane, 2014 (448 pp.)

This account of the roots of Western liberalism by renowned Oxford political philosopher Larry Siedentop provides an excellent overview of the history of social and political thought — from classical Antiquity, through Hellenic Christianity and Scholasticism, to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. In the process, the author rebuts the claim that liberalism is a product of modernity and, instead, argues that it is the “offspring of Christianity”. It is Christianity, he argues, that changed the way we see the world — introducing the concepts of ‘moral equality’ and ‘human agency’, and producing the ideas of equality, charity, secularism, and individualism. While there are a few passages that may raise eyebrows — such as his insistence that St. Paul was “the greatest revolutionary in human history” — this is a comprehensive and highly readable book. ■



**Ein Europa, das es nicht gibt:
Die fatale Sprengkraft des Euro**

by Dominik Geppert
Berlin: Europa Verlag, 2013 (192 pp.)

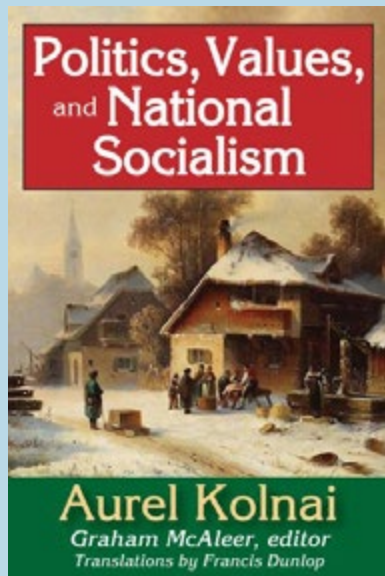
In this book (*A Europe that Does Not Exist: The Fatal Explosive Force of the Euro*), German historian Dominik Geppert argues that the instrument of the Euro, introduced in the wake of German unification as a way to curb excessive nationalism, is anything but a “unifying currency”. Instead, the effort to unite Europe’s national economies and promote solidarity by way of a supranational currency (and thereby inducing a break with the European past) has re-awakened the nationalist spirits of the past — and led to growing disputes and the risk of separation. The Euro, says the author, has thus developed as an explosive power rather than acting as a unifying force — which could prove fatal to the European project. ■

Les pierres d’angle: A quoi tenons-nous?

by Chantal Delsol
Paris: Cerf, 2014 (257 pp.)

The “cornerstones” that French philosopher Chantal Delsol has in mind in her new book (*The Cornerstones: What Do We Want?*) are those ‘first principles’ which are rooted in our Judeo-Christian heritage, and which underlie everything in European society and in Western civilisation. Calling for a rejection of today’s rampant relativism and scepticism, and arguing for a return to solid foundational principles (what the post-modernists call “truth claims”), Delsol argues for an urgent return to these ‘cornerstones’. But what exactly are these cornerstones? Delsol suggests they include freedom of conscience, the idea of human dignity, and the eternal quest for truth and the good. But she also reminds us that none of these cornerstones exist in a vacuum; they are, rather, rooted in the great cultural and religious legacy of the West — in a word, Christendom. ■





Politics, Values, and National Socialism

by Aurel Kolnai

New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2014 (338 pp.)

This book brings together numerous essays written by philosopher Aurel Kolnai (1900-1973) between 1925 and 1970. The essays, some translated for the first time, range from reflections on secularism and moral relativism to critiques of ideological movements like fascism and National Socialism. Kolnai methodically builds his argument against each of these movements, showing how each of them is opposed — or is a threat — to Western civilization. Primarily known as a moral philosopher, Kolnai's intellectual reach is broad. He not only looks at ethics but considers the theoretical threats to morality — and, more importantly, explains how to defend the moral order. Kolnai was visiting lecturer at the University of London from 1959 until his death. His *nachlass* was recently acquired by the Centre for Ethics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs at the University of St. Andrews, directed by philosopher John Haldane. This collection confirms Kolnai as one of the greatest moral and political thinkers. ■

Le Propre de l'homme: Sur une légitimité menacée

by Rémi Brague

Paris: Flammarion, 2013 (260 pp.)

In this collection of lectures (*The Essence of Man: A Threatened Legitimacy*) given at the Catholic University of Louvain, French philosopher Rémi Brague turns his attention to the idea of man. Brague says today we are experiencing an “unravelling of humanism”. Brague looks at the idea of man through the centuries, from the Greek conception of man as a ‘rational being’ and a ‘political animal’ to the idea of man as a conqueror, superior to all other creatures on Earth. He then focuses on modern rationalist thought, and its attempts to expand human knowledge and build a society entirely divorced from God — and completely disconnected from the fundamental reality of human nature. This is Brague at his best, offering a range of provocative arguments that show that at the heart of all nihilistic thought is man's obsolescence. ■



Die liberale Gesellschaft und ihr Ende:

Über den Selbstmord eines Systems

by Manfred Kleine-Hartlage

Steigra: Edition Antaios, 2013 (200 pp.)

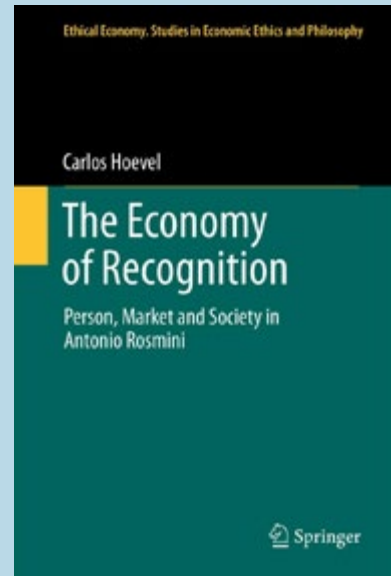
In this book (*The Liberal Society and its End: On the Suicide of a System*), the author argues that liberalism, invented in the age of the Enlightenment, is a ‘self-destroying’ belief system. Modernity, he says, engenders its own destruction. Rightly ordered societies, on the other hand, are based on a naturally grown consensus of values around such concepts as right and wrong, true and false, good and bad, us and them. But the systematic priority of the individual under liberalism has undermined the solidarity of families and endangered the stability of countries, the flourishing of culture, and the survival of civilisation. Declining birth rates, rising divorce rates, growing tensions in the international arena all suggest that Enlightenment liberalism is destroying the very basis on which modern society has been built. ■

**The Economy of Recognition:
Person, Market, and Society in Antonio Rosmini**

by Carlos Hoevel

Dordrecht: Springer, 2013 (245 pp.)

This is an important book about Italian philosopher, Antonio Rosmini (1797-1855). Hoevel provides an excellent introduction to Rosmini's ideas, explaining that he was one of the first Catholic thinkers to embrace the market economy — while arguing that the market cannot function properly without strong ethical and institutional foundations. Hoevel explores Rosmini's ideas in detail, tracing their influence and considering them in the context of different schools of economics. One of Rosmini's central ideas is his notion of human and economic action based on 'truth recognition', moral goodness, and 'personal capacities' for happiness and objective knowledge. As Hoevel explains, Rosmini's interpretation of economic action remains essentially at odds with modern economic utilitarianism, since he rejected the concepts of subjectivism and individualism. ■



The Conservative Revolution

by Cory Bernardi

Ballarat, Australia: Connor Court Publishing, 2013 (178 pp.)

Cory Bernardi, a senator from South Australia, has written a book that has generated so much controversy (with hundreds of vicious reviews posted on Amazon), that the publisher is planning a quick reprint. What's so controversial about this book? Nothing — unless you object to the senator calling abortion “an abhorrent form of birth control”, expressing support for traditional marriage, and calling for the traditional family model to be restored to a position of prominence. As if that weren't enough, Bernardi also argues in defence of free enterprise, private property, and the role of Christianity, warns against the political ideology of Islam, and calls for a revolution against the existing moral relativism of the West. It is important, he says, to “restore conservative values to their rightful place as the guiding principles of our civilisation and the cornerstone of governance”. ■

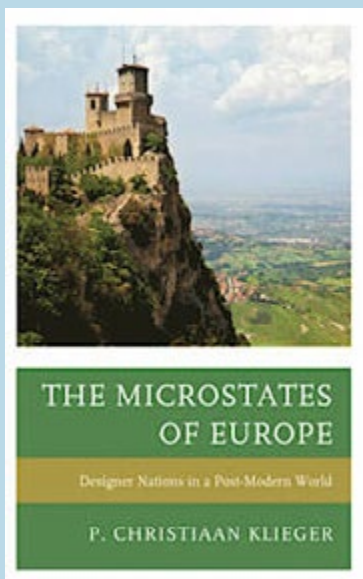
**Guter schneller Tod?
Von der Kunst, menschenwürdig zu sterben**

by Robert Spaemann & Bernd Wannewetsch

Basel: Brunnen-Verlag, 2013 (112 pp.)

In this short book (*A Good, Quick Death? On the Art of Dignified Dying*), philosopher Robert Spaemann and ethicist Bernd Wannewetsch take turns addressing profound and often uncomfortable questions about death and dying. They consider euthanasia, looking at the challenges of brain death and comas, and what to do with the elderly and the infirm. Who, they ask, should decide what to do in each case? Is there any “life unworthy of life”? The Nazis, they point out, already raised such questions before promoting eugenics and creating a “culture of death”. While some see euthanasia as an act of compassion and love — as a way to ease the suffering of the sick — the authors argue that no human being has the right to judge the value of another human being's life. The book also considers the societal impact of current demographic trends and the future of the West, as fewer people have children and more terminally ill people seek a ‘good, quick death’. ■





**The Microstates of Europe:
Designer Nations in a Post-Modern World**

by P. Christiaan Klieger

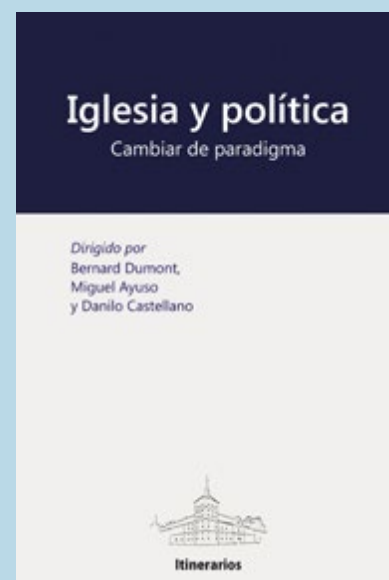
Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013 (242 pp.)

The author, a trained anthropologist, has written profiles of seven European microstates: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Malta, San Marino, Sovereign Order of St. John, and Vatican City. Each is remarkable not only because of its size but because it has been around for centuries, despite being next to larger, more aggressive neighbours. Fascinated with these microstates because they seemed like “logical anomalies” that should have disappeared in the modern, globalized world, Klieger explores their histories, tight-knit communities, and cultural traditions. He asks: How have they survived? Tackling this question with aplomb, Klieger explains that each microstate has found a way to remain economically competitive by specializing on unique services, ranging from casinos, to tax-free sales, to tourism involving military-religious orders. ■

Iglesia & política: Cambiar de paradigma

Edited by Bernard Dumont, Miguel Ayuso, & Danilo Castellano
Madrid: Itinerarios, 2013

This collection of essays (*The Church & Politics: Changing a Paradigm*) focuses on the theme of the long-term effects of the Second Vatican Council on the integrity of the Roman Catholic Church. All of the contributors write for the magazines *Catholica* (Paris), *Verbo* (Madrid), and *Instaurare* (Udine), and all share a traditionalist outlook. Historically the Church fought against the ideas and philosophical system that emerged from the Enlightenment. But during the 1960s, attempts were made — particularly through the promulgation of the declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* — to accept some Enlightenment ideas (with the idea of satiating the ‘forces of modernism’). This failed, say the authors, who believe the time has come to critically revisit the ideas of Vatican II and re-affirm a traditionalist paradigm. The book is being published simultaneously in Spanish, French, and Italian, with an English edition to be prepared later this year. ■

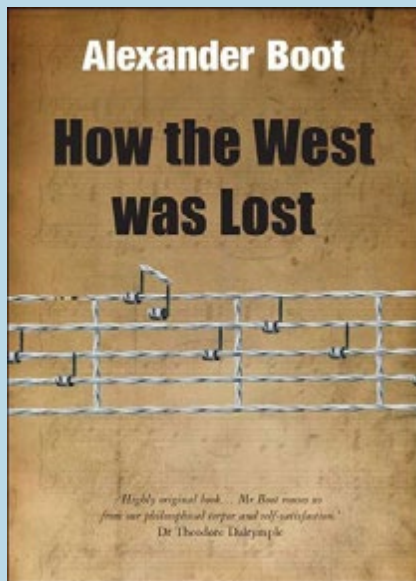


**Liberté et égalité:
Cours au Collège de France**

by Raymond Aron

Paris: Editions de l'EHESS, 2013 (61 pp.)

This booklet (*Freedom & Equality: Lectures at the Collège de France*) publishes the last lecture given by French philosopher and sociologist Raymond Aron (1905-1983) on April 4, 1978, at the Collège de France. It examines the concepts of liberty, equality, citizenship, and the idea of the common good. More specifically, Aron considers the nature and meaning of freedom, describing four categories: freedom of movement, economic freedom, religious freedom, and the freedom that safety and security provide. Based on a badly-typed manuscript that Aron left behind, this is the first time this lecture has been made available. It should be of great interest to those interested in Aron’s understanding of the relationship between freedom and equality, which too often has been presented as a mutually exclusive choice. The preface has been provided by French philosopher Pierre Manent. ■



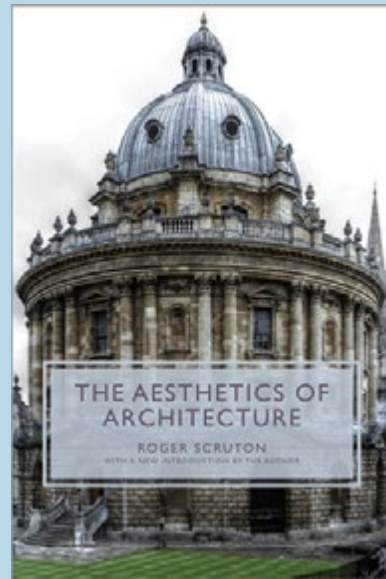
How the West Was Lost
By Alexander Boot
London: I.B. Tauris, 2006 (304 pp.)

This 2006 book received scant attention from reviewers and remains unknown by most conservatives. Boot — who studied philology at the University of Moscow, and then became a professor of English and American literature — worked for many years as an art critic. But after getting in trouble with the KGB, he chose to emigrate in 1973 to the US — only to find “that the West he was seeking was no longer there”.

Boot considers the idea of ‘the West’ and examines what has happened to the West he once sought. He considers its origins and its development, and discusses how the modern world has destroyed the very idea of ‘western civilization’, weakened our culture, and left modern man “spiritually atrophied”. In fact, the loss of religious faith, in combination with an exaggerated emphasis on science and technology, and the spread of radical Islam, are all part of the crisis of the West.

Boot writes in a style reminiscent of Theodore Dalrymple (who wrote the Foreword). For example: “In a functioning democratic state, the state passes laws in accordance with the wishes of the people, and also strives to uphold these laws. In Western Europe ... the state does neither, as most laws are passed by unelected EU bureaucrats and not elected national parliaments, and as the streets are increasingly ruled by gangs and criminals”. In his criticism of post-Enlightenment civilization and the loss of religion, he says: “Without God, laws are arbitrary and can fall prey either to evil design or ill-conceived political expediency, which is another way of saying that without God law is tyranny”.

Boot’s provocative conclusion — that the only resistance to this rising tide of barbarism and nihilism is coming from the Catholic Church — should generate much debate. ■



The Aesthetics of Architecture
by Roger Scruton
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013 (320 pp.)

This is a reprint of the original 1979 edition, also published by Princeton, which is considered one of the greatest introductions to the aesthetics of architecture and the meaning of the ‘aesthetic understanding’.

Scruton provides a detailed examination of important philosophical concepts in architecture, explaining how architecture is distinguished from other art forms by its very technique, as well as its ‘localized’ quality, its sense of function, and its public and non-personal character.

The chapters include considerations of the connection between morality and architecture, and explore the specialized terminology used and the language of architecture, while also delving into more philosophical questions such as whether architecture has an ‘essence’.

Scruton also provides a devastating critique of the functionalist, rationalist, and romantic theories of design, as well as a critical account of the Freudian and Marxist approaches to aesthetic value, and the influence of post-modernists on architectural design and understanding.

This is a profound, comprehensive treatise on architecture which, in the words of its author, can serve as a modest attempt to undo the “uglification of the world”. In fact, in his concluding chapter, Scruton calls for a return to ‘first principles’ in contemporary architectural theory, arguing that the aesthetic of architecture is really, in the end, an ‘aesthetic of everyday life’.

This edition includes a new introduction by the author, in which he discusses how his ideas have evolved and developed since the book’s original publication thirty years ago. It is elegantly written and should be read widely. ■

A Conservative Manifesto

Alexander Trachta

Florian Stumfall is a seasoned Christian German conservative — a political thinker and a highly erudite man. He worked for the Hanns Seidel Foundation in Munich and was active in the Christian Social Union (CSU) of Bavaria. And for 25 years he edited *Bayernkurier*, a conservative German weekly published since 1950. He currently lives in the South Tyrolean Dolomites, where he continues to write political columns.

His 2011 book, *Zeitgeist & Gegenwind: Ein konservatives Manifest* (*Zeitgeist & Headwinds: A Conservative Manifesto*), offers an insightful and compelling survey of the history of the West, and he examines the basic conservative — and fundamentally Christian — ideas it engendered. In ten lively chapters — Cosmogony, Life, Man, Society and the State, Economy, Europe, Totalitarianism, Islam, Foreign Cultures and the Third World, as well as Art and Philosophy — the author presents a highly readable account of the twists and turns of European history, the development of Western civilization, and the importance of sound political ideas.

Starting from a realistic anthropology of man as a “flawed human being” — which, in contrast to all idealistic and utopian claims, accords with Christian theology and the ideas of German philosopher Arnold Gehlen — Stumfall addresses pressing current issues and warns against new, potentially totalitarian threats to our civilizational heritage. In this he includes the left-wing environmental movement as well as the egalitarian, freedom-hating ideology underlying ‘political correctness’.

In the proliferation of the welfare state, the author sees another danger: a shift in the balance between government and civil society to the detriment of individual liberties. As others recognize as well, he says there are increasingly clear signs that the financial viability of the much-lauded ‘European model’ will soon reach its limits. Consequently, he says, a rapid reversal of fortunes and a return to a more robust society — organized on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity and

a restoration of civic virtues (partially expressed in terms of “spontaneous self-organisation” as opposed to government-funded entitlement schemes) — is urgently needed.

Certain recent political developments in the European Union are of particular concern to the author. Stumfall sees the values of the rule of law, subsidiarity, and freedom all on the decline, while centralism, bureaucracy, and statism are in the ascendant. And he criticizes the increasing distance of European ‘elites’ from average citizens, pointing to the ‘immunisation’ of the political class from the concerns of the average voter, as exemplified by the former’s dismissal of any critical or opposing views as merely ‘anti-European sentiment’. This, he says, contradicts the very idea of democratic discussion.

In stark contrast to prevailing dogmas, Stumfall offers realistic assessments of man and the importance of Christian moral law, the classical concept of freedom and limits on state power, the social market economy, the principle of subsidiarity, and solidarity among citizens. He points to the need for a comprehensive humanistic education in order for conservatism to have a true, spiritual foundation — an approach that “does not worship the ashes but further carries the torch”. And he remains deeply sceptical of and vigilant against worldly promises of salvation and the attempts of national governments to implement them. He concludes that present times — characterized

by a growing number of regulatory mechanisms and other intrusions into the private sphere — call for a firm return to conservative politics.

The book will help inspire Europeans by offering a new sophisticated vision of conservative, Christian thinking. Stumfall’s reference to his text as “a conservative manifesto” for the 21st century is, indeed, justified. Given the clarity of his message, the richness of each and every sentence in the book, and the many rousing quotations he includes, his is a message worth spreading to readers across Europe. ■

Mr. Trachta works as a lawyer in Vienna and is an occasional freelance writer. This is an expanded version of a book review originally published in German in the May 2013 edition of the Austrian magazine, Academia.



**Zeitgeist & Gegenwind:
Ein konservatives Manifest**
Florian Stumfall
Hemau, Germany:
Tangrintler Medienhaus, 2011
(432 pp.)

Europe's Judeo-Christian Roots

Filip Mazurczak

That Europe is experiencing a profound crisis of its Christian identity has been abundantly clear for a decade or so, since Brussels refused to recognize the religious roots of the Old Continent in the preamble to the European Constitution. Christians worldwide — most prominently, Pope Benedict XVI, who made the re-evangelization of Europe a priority during his pontificate — have recognized this fact.

However, the danger with any crisis is that it can be over-intellectualized and analyzed to death while no real steps are taken. This is also the case with recognizing Europe's religious roots. Tomes have been written about the continent's spiritual amnesia but few concrete steps have been taken. This short article proposes what is needed to bring Europe back to its heritage.

The crisis must first be truly understood as it is. The biggest problem related to this is not that rates of religious observance are decreasing. This is certainly dramatic, especially for religious leaders. Across Europe, many churches have been turned into pizzerias and discotheques, while many religious orders struggle with a paucity of vocations. Yet the struggle for Europe's soul is much deeper and it is not a matter of mere statistics. Rather, those concerned about Europe's identity must realize that the problem is not that church pews across much of Europe are sparsely filled with old ladies and immigrants but rather that Europe — and the West, more broadly — is losing its moral compass and negating its heritage. To understand the danger of this it is worth recalling Ivan Karamazov's insight that when God is dead, we can do anything we please. Furthermore, to erase Christianity from Europe's heritage is as senseless as denying the Greco-Roman roots of our civilization or any of the other major pillars of the West.

Having grasped this, those concerned about Europe's religious roots should pursue two parallel strategies. The first strategy is aimed at those who are — at least formally — believers. Although across much of Europe religious practice has declined in the past century, the majority of Europeans still profess a belief in God and consider themselves to be Christians. It is imperative that those people be encouraged to become more impassioned and more active in their faith.

We cannot reach out to everyone. This is why new methods of re-evangelization — what recent popes have referred to as the “new evangelization” — are necessary. In the United States, a campaign called ‘Catholics Come Home’ encourages non-practicing Catholics to return to the practice of their faith through television advertisements and a simple, compassionate website explaining Catholicism. In dioceses that have participated in the program, Sunday church attendance has risen by an average of 10%.

Christians in Europe have started similar outreach efforts. In Britain, two Anglican priests founded the Alpha Course in the 1990s, which re-educates lapsed Christians about the fundamental principles of Christianity. As a result, adult confirmations in the Church of England have been rising in the past 20 years or so. Such initiatives are likely to forge a new generation of European Christians who will change their societies by engaging in the media, academia, or politics.

It is worth noting that, in terms of secularization, Europe should not be thought of as a uniform continent. In the former Soviet Bloc, Christianity is largely vibrant. In December 2013, two-thirds of Croatians voted to amend their constitution and define marriage as between a man and a woman. Meanwhile, Hungary's current government — as reflected in its policy priorities and its Basic Law of 2011 — arguably takes Christianity and the natural law more seriously than any other country in the Northern Hemisphere. Catholicism also remains strong in Poland and Slovakia, while Orthodoxy is resurgent in Russia, Georgia, and Romania. Thus, West European conservatives should engage in greater dialogue with Eastern Europe and support the nascent pro-Christian movements there — against the secular bureaucrats in Brussels and Washington.

The second strategy to pursue is addressed to non-Christians. Rather than proselytize aggressively or see all non-believers as kindred spirits of Richard Dawkins and other atheist fundamentalists, European Christians should seek allies with non-believers and those who profess other faiths. It is worth noting that there are non-Christians who are equally concerned about Europe's malaise and who are worth working with.

What is more, such people's authority is often stronger in the public discourse, as they are non-Christians and do not represent a specific religion or interest group. For example, one of the harshest critiques of the European Constitution's omission of Europe's Christian identity was made the brilliant constitutional lawyer Joseph Weiler, an Orthodox Jew. Meanwhile, last year Catholics in France who marched against Hollande's assault on marriage were joined by Jews, Buddhists, and non-believers of good will. Also, several atheist intellectuals have come to the realization that Europe would not exist without Christianity, and have defended the continent's heritage. Oriana Fallaci, Marcello Pera, and Pier Paolo Pasolini all come to mind. Meanwhile, Nat Hentoff, a Jewish atheist and socialist, has become one of the most prominent intellectual opponents of legalized abortion in the United States. Christians must work side-by-side with such people, overcoming divisions and, instead, uniting for Europe's future.

At the same time, Christians must re-think how they engage in discussions with a post-theistic world. Too often, Christians are either defensive or too bogged down by political correctness. For example, many books

published by the Roman Catholic Church churn out many works of apologetics regarding Church history. If one reads these books and nothing else, one can end up thinking that the Church never did anything wrong throughout its history, and can begin to suggest to others that Rome burned Giordano Bruno and Jan Hus at the stake with justification — and to suggest otherwise is to be an anti-Catholic bigot. Yes, it is true that much of the mainstream media blows Christianity's sins out of proportion. But at the same time, they cannot be denied.

A much better approach is that of Pope John Paul II. In 2000, he apologized in Rome's Colosseum to Jews, Protestants, Native Americans, and other groups hurt by the Church throughout the ages. This may have ruffled the feathers of quite a few cardinals in the Roman Curia, but it made him a believable person who cleansed Catholicism of its sins. To believe that no Christians ever did anything wrong can sound improbable even to a child. Thus, Christians should be aware of the fact that their predecessors have hurt others rather than try to justify or minimise these un-Christian transgressions.

At the same time, such a defensive position does result from something. I remember in 2010 as a recent university graduate I was at a summer seminar on Catholic social teaching. One of the participants, a student from Estonia, told me that all he knew about Christianity was that it had a bloody history of Inquisitions and Crusades. This young man was being neither malicious nor unintelligent; that was simply what young people like him are being fed by the mainstream media these days. This must change.

Christians and non-Christians of good will should make efforts to better educate Europeans about their own heritage. Europeans should not be like this young Estonian but, instead, see that while there have been many human failures in the history of Christianity, there was also a great deal of love. We should educate Europe, for instance, about how Christian charities led to the foundation of hospitals and poorhouses across Europe in the Middle Ages. (Even Voltaire, who hated Christianity like few others, was impressed by the long history of Christian works of mercy.) We should teach about how great men like Father Jerzy Popieluszko gave his life in defence of freedom in Eastern Europe. We should inform others about the huge network of soup kitchens, group homes for those with disabilities, and AIDS clinics that Christians run around the world. Europeans must realize that even things as banal as the names of cities — think St. Louis or San Francisco — the clock tower and the days of the week come from Christianity. We should remember that the founders of what would become the European Union were devout Catholics and Protestants.

Is it possible to imagine Europe without Dante, Michelangelo, Chartres Cathedral, or the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela? Only once Europeans are truly educated about their cultural and religious heritage will they — regardless of whether they believe that God exists or not — see why a public defence of Christianity is necessary.

A final point is that when Christians and non-Christians of good will do defend Europe's cultural heritage in the public sphere, they must be bold. Yes, they will be criticised and ridiculed, and to stand up to this will require great courage. (One may remember Gandhi's famous words that before you are seen as a revolutionary you will be laughed at.) However, the alternative — not defending right reason or the natural law — will not achieve anything. In fact, I very often get the impression that contemporary Christians take a position of extreme political correctness.

I think especially of the rather cowardly way in which many contemporary Christians approach the question of homosexuality. Across the West — and increasingly around the world — people are being bombarded with propaganda promoting the homosexual lifestyle and aiming to redefine marriage. Rather than stand up for their beliefs, most Christians have been responding with the weak and unconvincing argument that they do not morally judge homosexuality, and that they only oppose the redefinition of marriage. If that is truly the case, then why even oppose the redefinition of marriage?

This position is poorly argued and makes no sense but is increasingly common. For instance, last year the Supreme Court of India — a very traditional society where family values remain strong — criminalised sodomy. The biggest critic of this move was not George Soros or Barack Obama but rather Cardinal Oswald Gracias, an Indian Catholic prelate. He said — incorrectly — that while the Church opposes the redefinition of marriage it does not oppose perverse sexual relations between people of the same sex. Instead, Gracias should have been proud of his country for defending traditional morality and not succumbing to the moral gangrene decomposing the West.

A position of much greater fortitude — and that would ultimately be more productive — is for Christians to admit that they realise that homosexuals do not choose their orientation, and that there are, indeed, homosexually inclined people of good will. However, one should not deny that such a lifestyle is contrary to the natural law, and deprives children of the right to a mother and a father. While every adult citizen has a right to live as he or she pleases, the homosexual agenda and gay propaganda that has saturated Western societies is a true threat to the family and should not remain unopposed.

In conclusion, it is clear that European Christianity is in crisis. However, those concerned about this should not give up but continue fighting. And rather than simply describing the problem and offering a weak or tepid defence of Christian belief, it is best to take practical, concrete, and bold steps to do something about it — and to stem the tide of lukewarm Christian conservatism. ■

Mr. Mazureczak has published in First Things, New Eastern Europe, and List Katolicki Miesięcznik. He studied history and Latin American literature at Creighton University, and international relations at George Washington University.

Meaning & Boredom in Heidegger & Macbeth

Pedro Blas González

What are the main sources of man's meaninglessness in the 21st century? The philosopher, Martin Heidegger, tells us in his seminal work *Being and Time* that man has a hole in his being. Man, Heidegger argues, knows that he lacks something. Not knowing exactly what we are lacking in our lives, we spend our entire existence meandering without a true sense of self. This is a pretty daunting predicament to find ourselves in. It is also the thought of a thinker who abandoned his Catholic upbringing. Even though, to Heidegger's credit, he wrote that the "Christian experience lives time itself". Christian life is the possibility to encounter God in time; the acceptance of temporal finitude. This is life as *verbum transitivum*.

According to Heidegger, human existence lacks fulfilment. This is a strange assertion, for the world, even in our demoralised age, has many happy and contented people. Contented people need very little to cherish life. By the same token, such people do not seek attention. Happy people do not even suspect that they are happy creatures. This is the paradox of happiness.

Undoubtedly, Heidegger's analysis of man's predicament regarding meaning seems excessive to the average reader. The German philosopher has written an enormous and dense book to inform us that man's life is empty. Man is drowning in angst or so it appears. Yet there is much about Heidegger's thought that is worth reading, even inspirational, like his understanding of the corrosive effect that technology can have on a person's sense of being. Can Heidegger be correct in his assessment, especially regarding the modern world? Perhaps it is necessary to ask: Why is life meaningless for many people at the start of the 21st century? This is a question that is very much tied to happiness. It is true that a vast segment of the population of the West is either bored or tired with daily life.

However, it is a big leap from boredom to suggesting that there is a hole in being. Heidegger argues that man's sense of meaninglessness is the result of discovering that life is about nothing. *Being and Nothingness* is a complex treatise on the question of being and the nature of nothingness. Nothing, Heidegger informs us, is what we discover as thoughtful adults. This discovery, according to Heidegger, should be the culmination of a life of reflection, of what he calls an authentic existence. Man must learn to cherish

life for what it is: nothing. This is Heidegger's conclusion. But is this what the average person in the West feels? Is Heidegger's philosophical analysis indicative of how most people experience life?

Mature human existence does on occasion deliver us to the understanding that life gives us bitter pills to swallow. Many thinkers — Voltaire and Schopenhauer, for instance — were precursors of Heidegger's philosophical stance. Great writers have also entertained the question of meaning. Shakespeare, Cervantes, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Blake quickly come to mind.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is a potent example of our concern with meaning. The play tightly knits murder into the fabric of the moral imagination. The play confronts the question of evil. What gain can there be in asking: Why is there evil? What illusions, if any, is Macbeth left with at the end of the play?

One possible answer to this question is that we do not have to fully comprehend the essence of evil to recognize its existence. Furthermore, evil-as-reality presents us with the mystery of existence in its grand totality. Reflection on the mystery of being can serve as an essential prologue in tackling the question of meaning. Saint Augustine reminds us of this.

It is not only theatre that Shakespeare presents us with, but also the wisdom of the humility that we must embrace in light of the many difficulties that we encounter in living. Solving the mystery

of being may not be a task for the feeble of mind. Yet the solution is not to establish the kingdom of nothingness.

Evil deeds done by unsuspecting people remain evil nonetheless. Evil is something real; it is not nothing. In terms of Heidegger's preoccupation with nothingness, what Macbeth ascertains at the end of the play is that — at least for him — life does not appear meaningful. This may be all well and good, but it is merely an indictment of one person's lack of happiness.

Macbeth reasons in Act 5, Scene 5: "Life ... is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". The interesting thing is that Macbeth is not an idiot. He calculates the necessary steps of how to kill another person. The end of Macbeth's life may be characterised as signifying nothing, but reason and murder — the same reasoning that concludes that there is no meaning — are not activities that take place in the void. Macbeth encounters nothingness in direct proportion to the numbing of his moral sense. For him, happiness is not a possibility. Perhaps what Macbeth encounters is boredom, the kind brought on by immorality.



A woodcut of Macbeth and Banquo encountering the witches, from the *Holinshead Chronicles* (1577/1587).

There can be little doubt that much of post-modern life is ruled by boredom. Alleged stagnation is post-modern man's great enemy. In this regard, Heidegger is correct. Our boredom with the progress that material life has made in our age can be explained in terms of the "spoiled child syndrome": the more we have, the stronger our need to satiate ourselves with greater pleasures to come.

For us today, it is not enough to cherish the glass being half full. We lament that it is half empty. This signals the absence of the fullness of being. As a response to this existential emptiness, many people opt to satiate their lives with an addiction to pleasure.

Of equal importance to our understanding of happiness is Macbeth's discovery that tomorrow will resemble today. That is, for Macbeth hope has dwindled. For him, the promise of deliverance from boredom and meaninglessness is but a fiction. Taking these famous lines out of context can be a dangerous proposition, though. What remains is cold, calculating reason. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth premeditation of Duncan's murder was once considered hair-raising. This is no longer the case in our broken world today.

"All is permitted", Macbeth convinces himself. This lack of moral sense — the spirit of anarchy that takes over Macbeth — is what becomes of reason that goes unchecked by a moral compass: "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time".

Lack of meaning in post-modernity comes about through a combination of what Nietzsche has called the "death of God", and man's insatiable curiosity. The death of God has removed the possibility of divine transcendence from human existence. Without transcendence, man necessarily must make a God out of himself. In turn, this creates crushing anxiety that can only be alleviated by creating mechanisms that help us kill time.

Now we are back to Heidegger. How else are we to cope with such a bruising burden from day to day?

As for human curiosity, we must first showcase the difference between this and life-sustaining awe and wonder. Science has allowed us to peek into realms of invention that people several generations ago could have never imagined. This whetting of the appetite, as it were, only makes us more curious about technology that is yet to come. However, because we cannot satiate our desire for further innovation — the acquisition of gadgets, etc. — we quickly get bored with our current level of prosperity. We can call this the glass is half-empty syndrome.

If we can conceive of the latter two sources of meaninglessness as being essential aspects of human nature, we can then appreciate that perhaps man has two natures: a higher and a lower. Our higher nature cultivates wisdom, prudence and patience, and the humility that comes with genuine and lasting understanding. Remember Socrates' saying: "All I know is that I know nothing". How many of our later-day geniuses and gurus are willing to admit this time-tested truism?

Science brings about material progress through the discovery of technique. It is from technique that we eventually get advanced technology. The creation of

technique is inevitable, and thus is fuelled by our higher nature. We develop techniques for what we honestly imagine will be greater self-subsistence. The trouble with man is that we are fickle creatures that get bored easily. There came a point after the Industrial Revolution when technique became so advanced and reliable that we lost sight of our previous difficulties and misery.

But man has a short memory. The past is quickly glossed over as soon as we find ourselves in a comfortable and enjoyable present. Again, this is a symptom of the spoiled child malady.

Our current predicament is perhaps best compared with the tale of the goose that laid the golden egg. In that story, a gifted goose — a hen in other variations of the story — lays golden eggs. The people who own the animal believe it to be full of eggs. If only they take out all the eggs at once, they reason, they will be instantly rich. Of course, the animal lays one egg at a time. By killing the goose the owners lose the source of their daily golden egg.

By believing that technology is replete with infinite inventions and material creations in-waiting, we start to overlook the present and concentrate our glance on the future. Some people place all their hopes in forms of happiness — pleasure — that are only moving targets. Remember, the future is only a projection that may never materialize.

The projection of our whims and desires into the future, without stopping to relish the moment when we have attained happiness, fuels our current boredom. For many people today, life can only be tolerated as a series of adventures. This is motivated by the boredom of their last foray into pleasure. So, they seek a new one, and then another — tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.

One source of boredom in our milieu is a lack of humility in life. Many people today believe that all meaning and purpose in life is tied solely to personal gratification and sensual pleasure. They believe there is nothing beyond this life and are thus encouraged to pursue lives of temporal but perpetual dynamism. Lack of humility destroys man's capacity to find meaning in existence and is a major source of unhappiness for post-modern man. This is one reason why so many people fill all hours of the day with menial tasks. Unable to accept the idea that he is a 'spiritual' being, temporal existence itself becomes a crushing blow to man's sense of self-importance.

Our lack of humility has us vehemently denying the existence of divine transcendence. And, in turn, our negation of transcendence forces us to take stock of our lives in unprecedented, self-conscious ways — that try to make each of us into a God. ■

Dr. González is professor of philosophy at Barry University in the US. He has published Human Existence as Radical Reality: Ortega's Philosophy of Subjectivity (2005), Fragments: Essays in Subjectivity, Individuality and Autonomy (2005), Ortega's 'The Revolt of the Masses' and the Triumph of the New Man (2007), Unamuno: A Lyrical Essay (2007), and Philosophical Perspectives on World Cinema (2011). He is also the author of the novels Dreaming in the Cathedral (2010) and Fantasia (2012).

The Importance of Terminology

Brian Gill

To the detriment of their own agenda, conservatives on both sides of the Atlantic have too often shunned the cold insight offered by Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*.

But the challenges confronting conservatives are not of a merely semantic nature. Nor will the simple reconsideration of terminology such as 'liberal', 'conservative', or even 'classical liberal' guarantee the ascendancy of truly conservative ideas in the public space. Modern-day liberal and pro-collectivist forces have nearly everywhere seized the "commanding heights" — particularly in the media, academia, and the judiciary — and, consequently, proponents of limited government and individual liberty face uphill battles in re-connecting with various key demographic groups.

The ultimate challenge, therefore, is to overcome what radio executive and producer Lee Habeeb aptly branded a "storytelling deficit" — that is, the inability to put forward a cohesive, compelling narrative. Words, as the building blocks of thoughts, constitute an essential tool of advocacy and, used repeatedly over time, may contribute to issue-specific political victories.

Much may be gained from studying the Left, which has long effectively introduced, appropriated, and redefined language to suit its ambitions. Among the contributing factors in the triumph of Marxism-Leninism was adoption of the name *Bolsheviks* (the majority) coupled with trivialization of opponents as *Mensheviks* (the minority), although the reality was vice versa. A more recent example is the use of the term *homophobia*, coined by George Weinberg in the late 1960s. The choice of wording is, from a purely tactical perspective, doubly brilliant: by casting resistance to

the gay rights agenda as a fear — and an irrational one at that — the term suggests that opposition may neither be based on moral or religious convictions, nor driven by, for example, genuine concern for the psychological development of children raised in same-sex households.

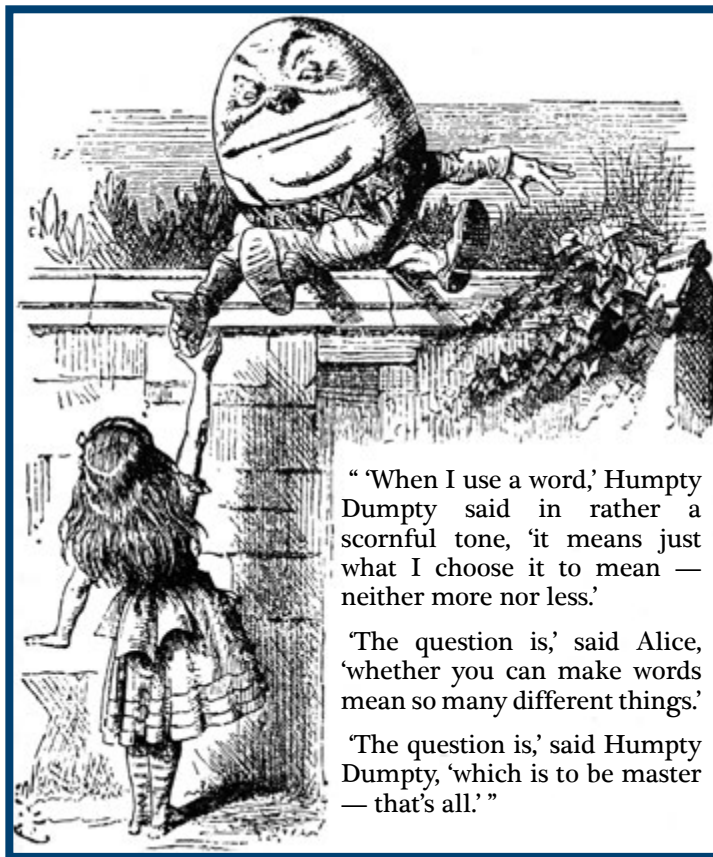
Decades later, these suppositions found resonance in *United States vs. Windsor*, the landmark 2013 Supreme Court case that further paved the way for gay marriage. Writing for the majority, Justice Kennedy declared that a federal statute preserving the institution of marriage to heterosexual couples could only be motivated by "a bare congressional desire to harm a politically unpopular group". In late

2012, the Associated Press announced its discontinuation of the term "homophobia". Yet with the concept behind it enshrined in a series of judicial precedents (with *US vs. Windsor* soon to follow), the word itself was no longer essential.

The recent US budget fight further illustrates the strong link between language and outcomes. Democrats raised the spectre of a government *shutdown* and argued that a subsequent failure to raise the *debt ceiling* would cause widespread service disruptions and, ultimately, a global catastrophe. In reality, the effects were less dire than the first, absolutist term implies: all 1.4 million military personnel continued in their jobs, as did 760,000 of 800,000 civilian

defence employees, and operations of many federal agencies were only scaled back pending resolution. Thus, the impasse more accurately caused a "partial shutdown" (a more neutral description occasionally offered by the mainstream media) or a "slim-down" (the preferred assessment of a leading conservative news outlet).

But at a series of White House briefings, reporters repeatedly echoed only the most dramatic variant used by press secretary Jay Carney.



A classic illustration of Humpty Dumpty by John Tenniel, 1871.

"'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.'"

"'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'"

"'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master — that's all.'"

Public opinion, largely resting as it does on mere perceptions, quickly brought sufficient pressure on Republicans to concede. In this regard, parallels may be drawn with Europe, where *austerity* — previously understood as the virtue of living within one's means — now connotes a callous disregard for the hardship of citizens.

Contrarily, there is widespread support for — or at least apathy toward — further deficit spending. Again, the result can be partially explained by wordplay. Specifically, one of the metaphors used — a “glass ceiling” — invokes an artificial if not unjust barrier which is often believed to stifle the professional development of women. By association, raising the debt ceiling should enable economic growth. It then comes as little wonder that depraved motives were attributed to Republicans who sought to reign in deficit spending.

For example, an article running in *The Dish* (a source that claims to be “biased and balanced”) alleged “fanaticism” and an “extraordinarily vehement attitude” that “nearly destroyed the US and global economy”. The word “sabotage” carries several meanings, one being a criminal offense subject to up to life imprisonment under Section 18 of the US Code. It bears further note that sabotage is often carried out by foreign agents, a scenario that matches President Obama's prior denunciations of the Tea Party, whom he referred to indirectly as “shadowy groups with harmless-sounding names”, whose ads, he speculated, might be backed by a “foreign controlled corporation”.

As a matter of civility, such accusations should not be made lightly. Yet conservatives cannot count on their opponents to be either restrained or self-policing; conservatives need to be ready with a clear, imaginative message.

As one component of a revised campaign, conservatives — including classical (or European) liberals, and traditionalists alike — should first seek to restore the true, rich meaning of words. In the context of environmental matters, for example, the Left has succeeded in confounding *climate* with *weather*. A tropical storm — however dramatic the imagery that results — belongs to the second category and does not create an automatic need for anti-competitive environmental regulations on industry or large-scale carbon trading programs (from which select groups will profit).

In the social sphere, US Democrats are “the party of choice” only to the extent that they have singularly pegged the label “choice” to abortion (regardless of the fact that the unborn do not participate). But in other areas, they have already restricted liberty — or would like to — across a broad spectrum of activities: municipal bans exist on *foie gras*, trans-fat, and take-away jumbo sodas, to name a few products targeted. Those on the political left consistently block school voucher systems

(which would make private schools more accessible for the middle class) and replacement of compulsory union membership with voluntary membership, while supporting speech codes that limit freedom of expression. Perhaps a wider understanding of “choice” would better cast conservatives as the champions of individual freedom and consumer sovereignty, both of which are anathema to the ‘nanny statism’ of the Left.

Second, conservatives should cease engaging the Left on its own terms and offer alternatives that more honestly frame discussions. The starting point might be to challenge basic ideological labels such as *progressivism*, which in a vacuum sounds unassailable (what rational person would be against, say, medical breakthroughs or technological advances?). Yet, in practice, the term embraces many positions that are in fact counter-productive, such as policies that suppress birth rates or hinder small businesses. Diplomatic practices may be utilized to expose such internal contradictions in leftist terminology (e.g., when describing the representatives of separatist regions, international organizations frequently add “so-called” or “self-declared” in order to avoid legitimating them). So perhaps consistent references to “so-called liberals” or even “neo-liberals” might divest the Left of a title improperly bundled with the patrimony of Adam Smith and Edmund Burke — that is, “classical liberalism”, rooted in respect for the person as the fundamental unit of society.

Third, conservatives should, on a selective basis, utilize competing language to shift public debate. Concerning economics, rather than to speak of *raising* the debt *ceiling*, conservatives might refer to *lowering* the “abyss”. This portrayal is consistent both with accounting principles and the sober conviction that profligate spending threatens the livelihood of future generations. While fiscal conservatives — in both the US and Europe — may not always carry the day on budget fights, they almost certainly will lose subsequent battles if they don't reshape public attitudes by re-appropriating the terms of debate.

Much work needs to be done if conservatives are to return to governance. Whether we consider Europe or the US, the Left enjoys a natural rhetorical advantage. That is why we need to seek to better use linguistic tools to pursue two main lines of attack: first, underscore why the promises of neo-liberalism ring hollow and, second, demonstrate why conservatives are more reliable as guardian of the future.

Let us take advantage of the men and women of letters, the wordsmiths, and the “scribbling sinners” among our ranks to hone the conservative appeal to voters. ■

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T.E. Hulme's Hard Words

G.K. Montrose

In an age dominated by liberalism, the life and opinions of an author said to have been capable of kicking a theory — as well as a man — downstairs when the occasion demanded may serve as inspiration for conservatives. T.E. Hulme (pronounced “Hume”) was such a man.

“Hulme ... energetically declared his distaste for all Progressives from Rousseau to H.G. Wells”, wrote C.K. Ogden in a summary of a lecture on “Anti-Romanticism and Original Sin” printed in the *Cambridge Magazine* on 9 March 1912. “He emphasized the importance of much repetition of certain words — words of power — in the formation of prejudice and ideas, and the general clouding of our judgment. Repeat the word ‘Progress’ often enough and it is easy to delude oneself into denying the truths of the doctrine of Original Sin amidst the mess of hypothetical Utopias, which ignore the principle of the constancy of Man”.

The “War Notes” written by Hulme reveal great clarity of perception, and provide an excellent introduction to his provocative style. Published in the *New Age* between late 1915 and early 1916 while he was recuperating from wounds suffered in Flanders, they generally concern the strategic and technical aspects of the First World War. But above all, they stand out for their excoriating anti-liberalism.

The impact of the “War Notes” may be measured by the fact that Bertrand Russell, at the time the leading intellectual force behind the British anti-war movement, felt compelled to respond repeatedly to Hulme in the *Cambridge Magazine*. Countering Hulme’s arguments was no easy task, for his views were not those of a warmonger or militarist. Rather, behind Hulme’s writings lay a view of human nature which was completely at odds with that of Russell.

T.S. Eliot thought Hulme “appeared as the forerunner of a new attitude of mind, which should be the twentieth-century mind, if the 20th century is to have a mind of its own. Hulme is classical, reactionary and revolutionary: He is the

antipodes of the eclectic, tolerant, and democratic mind of the last century. And his writing, his fragmentary notes and his outlines, is the writing of an individual who wished to satisfy himself before he cared to enchant a cultivated public”. This is remarkable praise for a man whose reputation largely rests on his posthumously published work and who, during his lifetime, published neither his own book nor a collection of his essays.

Thomas Ernest Hulme was born on 16 September 1883 at Gratton Hall, Endon, North Staffordshire to a family of gentleman-farmers. He attended Newcastle High School for boys where he excelled in science and mathematics and

actively participated in the school’s debating society.

In 1902 Hulme was admitted to St. John’s College, Cambridge, only to be sent down two years later for what an early biographer delicately described as “indulging in a brawl”. Elaborating on this, Roger Kimball of *The New Criterion* noted that “[a] college document that might have slipped from Bertie Wooster’s dossier mentions ‘over-stepping the limits of the traditional license authorized by the authorities on Boat Race night’”. On his departure from Cambridge, Hulme was given the longest mock funeral ever seen in the town.

Hulme then briefly studied at the University of London before setting sail in 1906 for Canada where he travelled widely, working on the railway, on farms and in timber mills. On his return to Europe, he immersed himself in avant-garde art and intellectual circles. His path carried him to Brussels, to London as a leading member of the Poet’s Club, to Bologna for a meeting of the International Philosophical Congress, and on to Paris,

where he came across the ideas of Charles Maurras, Pierre Lasserre, and *L’Action Française*.

In early 1912 Hulme gained readmission to St. John’s with the support of philosopher Henri Bergson whose work he had been busy explaining and defending. But in the fall of that year, Hulme went on a second involuntary leave from Cambridge. This time, fleeing the country to evade prosecution by an enraged father who claimed that Hulme had tried to seduce his 16-year-old daughter. The next year he



Portrait of T.E. Hulme in 1912. Photograph courtesy of the [T.E. Hulme Archive at Keele University](#) in the UK.

travelled to Berlin where he was influenced by the ideas of art historian Wilhelm Worringer.

When the First World War broke out in August 1914, Hulme was quick to enlist — as a private — in the British army. In 1916 he received a commission as a Second Lieutenant with the Royal Marine Artillery. On 28 September 1917, Hulme was killed in Flanders by a German shell, just twelve days after his thirty-fourth birthday. “Apparently absorbed in some thought of his own he had failed to hear it coming and remained standing while those around threw themselves flat to the ground”, writes Robert Ferguson. Hulme lies interred at the Military Cemetery of Koksijde, Belgium, “where — no doubt for want of space — he is described simply as ‘One of the War Poets’”.

Today, Hulme comes as close to the image of an ‘authentic reactionary’ as one can get (though, rather unfittingly, he was a teetotaler). He was not, in Nicolás Gómez Dávila’s words, “a nostalgic dreamer of a cancelled past, but rather a hunter of sacred shades upon the eternal hills”. At the beginning of his essay “A Tory Philosophy”, we encounter Hulme at his best when he states: “It is my aim to explain in this article why I believe in original sin, why I can’t stand romanticism, and why I am a certain kind of Tory”. This passage nicely captures his intellectual conservatism which is rooted in the distinction between what he termed the ‘classic’ and the ‘romantic’ views of life.

The ‘classic’ point of view, Hulme argues, is this: “Man is by his very nature essentially limited and incapable of anything extraordinary. He is incapable of attaining any kind of perfection, because either by nature, as the result of original sin, or the result of evolution, he encloses within him certain antinomies. There is a war of instincts inside him, and it is part of his permanent characteristics that this must always be so. ... The best results can only be got out of man as the result of a certain discipline which introduces order into this internal anarchy”.

The ‘romantic’ point of view is the exact opposite: “It does not think that man is by nature bad, turned into something good by a certain order or discipline, but that, on the contrary, man is something rather wonderful, and that so far he has been prevented from exhibiting any wonderful qualities by these very restrictions of order and discipline that the classic praised”.

Hulme found the quintessential expression of the romantic view in Rousseau, from whose letters he quotes the following: “The fundamental principle of all morality is that man is a being naturally loving justice. In *Emile* I have endeavoured to show how vice and error, foreign to the natural constitution of man, have been introduced from outside, and have insensibly altered him”.

Recognizing the import of this distinction some fifty years later, the late Kenneth Minogue applied it to explain the thin foundations of progressivism in his 1963 classic *The Liberal Mind*. “The consequences of Hulme’s [classicist] doctrine”, Minogue wrote, “are conservatism in politics and absolutism in ethics”. It nourishes respect for tradition, social institutions and the sense that society is “based on a fairly rigid kind of differentiation”.

The romantic view of the unlimited capabilities of men, on the other hand, leads to the belief “that they must be unchained from the bonds of social institution in order that

each man can be truly himself — exactly what the classicist is afraid of”. Romanticism’s most likely political consequence is liberalism; its ethical consequence: relativism. It causes distaste for tradition and is hostile to the notion of a lasting natural variance.

Of course, such views are not novel. The inextricable link between romanticism and liberalism is beautifully expressed in Jeremiah 2:20 — the proverbial *non serviam* — which may be regarded as the antithetical anchoring point for Hulme’s classicism: “Of eternity thou hast broken the yoke, ruptured the chains and said: I will not serve”.

As Hulme emphasized in his writings, the adoption of the ‘classic’ or the ‘romantic’ mindset completely determines one’s outlook on life — from art to politics and from ethics to literature. There can be no conversion, Hulme insisted, but for convincing the other side of the falsehood of its fundamental principles. Any debate which fails to take this into account is futile.

Hulme combined mental acumen with a pugnacious style, which made him, as Kimball notes, particularly effective on the attack. Concerning tone, Hulme himself had noted: “with perfect style, the solid leather for reading, each sentence should be a lump, a piece of clay; rather, a wall touched with soft fingers”. The lethal subtlety to which Hulme’s combination of intellect and style lead is revealed in his attack on Nietzsche whose particular brand of ‘classicism’ Hulme was careful to distinguish from his own.

He thus wrote: “Most people have been in the habit of associating those [classicist] views with Nietzsche. It is true that they do occur in him, but he made them so frightfully vulgar that no classic would acknowledge them. In him you have the spectacle of a romantic seizing on the classic point of view because it attracted him purely as a theory, and who, being a romantic, in taking up this theory, passed his slimy fingers over every detail of it. Everything loses its value. The same idea of the necessary hierarchy of classes, with their varying capacities and duties, gets turned into the romantic nonsense of the two kinds of morality, the slave and the master morality, and every other element of the classic point gets transmuted in a similar way into something ridiculous”.

Hulme is a perfect model for conservatives — perhaps not so much for the originality of his views but rather for the sheer force of his argument and style. He was what any true conservative desires to be — a nemesis of liberalism simply by being a scandal to it. Like Gómez Dávila’s ‘authentic reactionary’, Hulme at first causes a vague discomfort, which turns into horror once the depth of his argument becomes evident.

As Gómez Dávila put it: “In the face of the reactionary attitude the progressive experiences a slight scorn, accompanied by surprise and restlessness. In order to soothe his apprehensions, the progressive is in the habit of interpreting this unseasonable and shocking attitude as a guise for self-interest or as a symptom of stupidity; but only the journalist, the politician, and the fool are not secretly flustered before the tenacity with which the loftiest intelligences of the West, for the past one hundred fifty years, amass objections against the modern world”. ■

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War Notes — An Invitation

In this edition of *The European Conservative*, we introduce a new occasional section. For the inauguration, we are re-printing Hulme's first "War Note", originally published 11 November 1915 in the *New Age* under the pseudonym of "North Staffs". Enjoy reading it. We will be re-publishing some of Hulme's other pieces in this section in forthcoming issues.

But we need more "War Notes" in our time. We need to remind conservatives of the noble task of clearly stating their disagreement. Therefore, we would like to invite readers to contribute short pieces of 500-1,500 words which can accompany Hulme's notes and which will serve as a testimony of the present-day ills of liberalism.

We propose two simple guidelines: (1) Write on anything you consider to be especially loathsome or disgusting about modern liberalism and liberal society in general; and (2) always seek to write with the hard, definite, personal word as Hulme did — drawing blood with your pen.

Should you wonder whether it is possible to produce any effect on a liberal through argument, remember that the answer is: probably not. Yet, as Hulme observed with delight, the attempt has to be made — for "[i]t is evidently more important to convert them than to insult them; though the latter will always remain a pleasant and a necessary duty".

War Notes, 11 November 1915

North Staffs / T.E. Hulme

The first remark of a foreigner visiting England today or of a soldier back from the front is that England does not yet realise that we are at war. Even allowing for our habitual taciturnity, usually intensified during critical periods, the remark is not only true, but it is considerably within the truth. Much less than the war itself are its issues realised; and since these, and not the event, are of the first importance, our failure to grasp the significance of the war may easily prove more disastrous than our failure to believe that a war is actually in progress. The inability of the mass of Englishmen to appreciate the issues of the war arises from a number of mental predispositions, some of them native to the English character, and others resulting from recent conditions and prevalent doctrines. Among the former is the reluctance of the national mind to dwell upon the subject of war at all. We are by nature one of the kindest people that ever lived, good-natured, sentimental and fundamentally amiable; and the contemplation of war, particularly in its realistic aspects, is naturally disagreeable to us. But this pleasing characteristic has unfortunately been flattered into something like a national vice by doctrines associated mainly with the Liberal school of opinion. Some of them are as follows.

There is, to begin with, the Liberal assumption, practically never challenged, that things are fixed more or less as they are, and cannot radically change. The map of Europe, for example, is commonly conceived of as having somehow become what it is, never greatly to change again. A petty political transformation, such as the republicanism of Portugal, may occur here, or a party dispute in Russia may establish a Duma there; but in the distribution of the main units of Europe no

change can be expected. From this reasoning, it will be seen, no event can be regarded as of really great importance; for why should we concern ourselves deeply when the outcome of every event is predestined to be comparatively small? An Armageddon may be upon us in the opinion of isolated thinkers and rhetorical journalists; but an Armageddon, in fact, threatening any fundamental transformation of European civilisation, is ex hypothesi impossible. To this it can only be replied that the hypothesis is not only wrong in fact, but it is likely to prove fatal when it becomes a doctrine. Far from being fixed in its now familiar features, both as regards distribution of political power and prevalence of a particular type of culture, Europe, it is the simple truth to say, is in a continual flux of which the present war is a highly critical intensification. The common phrase about things being in the melting-pot is neither hyperbole nor cliché when applied to the present war. It is, on the other hand, an exact metaphor. Literally every boundary in Europe, of political, social, intellectual, and cultural importance, is at this moment in dispute, not of argument alone, but of force; and as the war subsides, so will these boundaries be left where it places them, to determine the form of Europe during the coming period of peace.

An illustration from the trenches may illuminate the matter. From the point of view of the uninstructed observer, the line of trench-works extending from the Channel to the Alps appears to have several of the characteristics of fixity. Mutually hostile forces meet at the line and there, too, each party attempts to nibble at the other; but the main conformation of the line may be said to be relatively fixed; and such a fixed line, variously drawn, marked out Europe before the war. But we know very well that not only was the trench-line determined at every inch by local circumstances over which men had

control, but it is also the will of both parties — and, we hope, the destiny of the Allies — to change the position of the line completely. Similarly our Liberal friends may be reminded that the lines now making a map of Europe are the result in every instance of local circumstances governable by men; and as they were determined by men they can be changed by men. Europe, in short, is a creation, not a blind evolutionary product; and nothing connected with its mental features is any more fixed than the present relations, as expressed in the trench-lines, between the Allies and the enemy.

Another prevalent Liberal assumption, hostile to a proper appreciation of the significance of the war, is that progress is both inevitable and of necessity in one direction. That change, like the girl in the play, may of itself or by the intention of those who bring it about, take the wrong turning seems never to enter the heads of some of our most popular doctrinaires. All that is not Liberal in Europe or elsewhere is in their opinion not even fundamentally anti-Liberal or other-than-Liberal — it is merely an arrested development of an evolution which in any case must needs be Liberal in the end, or a reaction against, but still upon the line of, Liberalism. This, I need not say after stating it, is not only an error, but a particularly insular error. In the first place, evolution in our sense of the word — that is, evolution towards democracy — is not only not inevitable, but it is the most precarious, difficult, and exigent task political man has ever conceived. And, in the second place, far from it being the predestined path of every nation and race, only one or two nations have attempted to pursue it, while the rest deliberately and even, we might say, intelligently, pursue another path altogether as if that were progress, and are thus sincerely hostile to our own.

To take the instance that ought to be best known to us by now — that of Germany — how impossible it still appears for English Liberal opinion (Conservatives have, of course, no opinions) to eradicate from its mind the assumption that Germany is Liberal at heart. Nothing can be more contrary to the fact. Knowing Germany as I do from residence there as well as from history, past and present, I affirm that the mind of Germany is neither Liberal nor even Liberalising, that is, disposed to become Liberal. Of the two orders of German intelligence — the first-rate and the second-rate — both, it is true, are split upon the subject of democracy; but into parties of which in the first the anti-democratic party is intellectually the more able, and in the second more numerous. Set beside the names of the first-rate minds in Germany who support the present government and the theories upon which it is based, the names of its opponents of the same rank; it will be found that the former outweigh the latter. Similarly, if the numbers of the second-rate minds in Germany (the professional educated classes) who accept the State theory and practice are compared with the minds of the same order that challenge it, the result is equally menacing to democracy. It may be replied that the progress in numbers and influence of the German Social Democrats is opposed to my statement. But while admitting it partially, no great value attaches to it. The Social Democrats are without power, and they are, in private at least, without hope. English Liberals may entertain the belief that the German bureaucracy will collapse if it is defeated; nay, even, as I have heard said find its leaders at the end of the war

swinging upon lamp-posts. But German Social Democracy believes nothing of the kind. The parallel between the present German and the pre-revolutionary French government is fictitious, and no hopes built upon it have any foundation. The government of Louis was inefficient, unpopular, and, what is more, did not believe in itself. The German government is, on the other hand, efficient, popular, and self-confident. No hope of revolution from internal causes can therefore be anticipated. For the time being Germany is not only not Liberal, but it is actively bureaucratic and anti-Liberal, and appears likely to remain so. The only hope — and that is faint — for the victory of Social Democracy in Germany is the victory of the Allies.

Wolf, wolf, has been cried so many times in this country that, on the one hand, we have lost the sensation and almost the very notion of national peril, and, on the other hand, we have presumed upon our historic security to leave our future security to chance. In the matter of peril, for example, it is doubtful whether more than one in a thousand of our intelligent population has had his mind once crossed during the war by the thought that perhaps England is really in danger. And even fewer, I imagine, have once asked what are likely to be the consequences to the English of England's defeat. All we mean by democracy will certainly take a second place in our daily lives if the Central Powers have their way. It cannot be otherwise. Democracy and bureaucracy are obviously incompatible principles; both cannot be dominant at the same time; they are the professional and the human ideals which are always in antagonism. For German bureaucracy to succeed is to ensure the failure of English democracy, and with it of all the secondary variations dependent upon it. One of these, paradoxical as it may seem, is the freedom from the necessity to be pre-occupied by a narrow politic. Think of the psychology of the Poles, and, in another way, of the Irish. Both are, in the particular sense we are discussing, more than merely defeated nations; they are nations which their conquerors cannot assimilate, and which, equally, cannot assimilate themselves with their conquerors. With what result? Their politic is born of resentment, bred on conspiracy, and brought up in an atmosphere of whispered gossip. Everything must be subordinated to the Catilinarian in nations such as these. Free thought, free speech, free culture, all these are resented among a conquered but unconvinced people as diversions of energy from the one occupation of recovering their independence. It is to this state that the victory of Germany, though it stopped short of an actual conquest, would bring us in England. And I leave it to be reckoned what further losses would result from it.

It will be seen, I hope, that in the discussion of the war at this stage the question of causes is comparatively unimportant. Subsequently, when history comes to be written, and when, if happily it be so, the peril is past, the causes, immediate and remote, may be examined, and judgment may be passed upon them. But it is with consequences that our first concern should be at this moment. Let it be supposed, if you please, that we got into the war by the worst of all possible means; that no crime was left uncommitted by our diplomacy and our politic to bring it about — the fact still remains that the consequences of defeat are such as nobody in England can face with his eyes open. Pacifists, Little-Englanders, Social revolutionaries, pedants — all alike are equally involved in the

results of the war. Not one can afford to be indifferent to it. At the same time, not one can afford to wish anything less than the victory of the Allies. In a national melting such as the present, everybody is concerned primarily, not with the question of how we got into it, but how we are to get out of it. All other questions are secondary if not irrelevant.

That Germany has a theory is well known; but what her theory is our publicists have taken less trouble than the publicists of any other nation to discover. That it is, as I have said, not only the contrary but the challenging contrary of the democratic theory on which England stands is certain. Moreover, it is singularly complete after its fashion, and is aimed against England at every point. In a recent work on the war, for example, Max Scheler, an exceedingly intelligent German, undertakes to prove that the English doctrine of the European Balance of Power is purely selfish and not even incidentally of benefit to Europe; and he contrasts it, from this ethical and cultural standpoint, with the doctrine now being exercised by Germany. England, he says, has a selfish interest in the maintenance of division on the Continent, for the simple reason that her sea-supremacy might be endangered by a united Europe. Moreover, the ideas for which England stands are not of a sufficiently elevated character to warrant Europe in submission. They are, says Scheler, democratic and hence capitalist. Hence, again, in the German conception of progress, they are reactionary. To argue against this criticism of England's policy is easy. We can say, for example, that the doctrine of the Balance of Power is one of the most disinterested policies ever pursued by a nation. Compare it with its precise opposite, the Monroe doctrine of the United States. The Monroe doctrine declares 'hands off' the American continent to every power but America. The English doctrine of the European Balance of Power declares, on the contrary, England's own 'hands off'. No one, I think, of any importance has ever accused England of desiring to possess another square inch of European soil. Again, it is manifestly absurd to deny that incidentally, if not directly, our maintenance of the Balance of Power has been of advantage to Europe, if nationality, democracy, and liberty

have any value. The policy of maintaining the integrity of small European nations may, it is true, be conceived as a means of preserving our own integrity; but incidentally it is good for the small nations as well. They, at least, will not deny the benefit Europe has received at the hands of England. Once again, what is the alternative Germany offers to Europe for our English doctrine of the Balance of Power? Is it a European Commonwealth of nations, a new Hellas, such as, indeed, is the hope of our English policy? On the contrary, it is a European Empire, a Macedonian military empire, in which Germany would play the same part that Prussia plays today in Germany itself. Bad as the consequences for Europe from our Balance of Power may be, the consequences from the German hegemony would be far worse. No politics is ideal; but in a world of real politics, the German is hateful to all but Germans. But, as I said, to argue is easy. Today it is a matter of force. What is being settled, in the present war is the political, intellectual, and ethical configuration of Europe for the coming century. All who can see an inch in front of their nose must realise it. The future is being created now.

As a further evidence that English opinion has not yet grasped the significance of the war, its personalities in our press may be cited. Strictly speaking, a war of the present character ought, except for history, to be anonymous. The effective combatants are much more powers than men; they are certainly much greater than the personalities of any of the figures on either side. Yet see with what eagerness opinion seizes upon the Kaiser or Miss Cavell to reduce the image of the war to their mind's capacity; as if the power of thought upon impersonal causes were lost among us. Neither the Kaiser, being human, can stand effectively for the diabolism of the German theory; nor can Miss Cavell, however brave, stand effectively for the virtue of the Allied cause. Personalities, if they are allowed to become symbolic and to absorb the attention of the mind, disguise by diminution the magnitude of the super-personal issues at stake. Abstract terms would better express the combatants; only the abstract terms must be understood. ■



Emperor Wilhelm with Prince Oskar of Prussia, Prince Louis of Bavaria, Prince Max of Baden (and his son, Crown Prince Wilhelm), the Grand Duke of Hesse, the Grand Duke of Baden, and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, at pre-war military maneuvers in late 1909. *Photograph courtesy of Zeitschrift Deutscher Hausschatz (1910).*

Kenneth Minogue (1930-2013)

David Martin Jones

Ken Minogue died in the Galapagos Islands in June [2013], very much as he lived, engaged with ideas and in conversation down to his last breath. Approaching his eighty-third year, despite a heart problem he had in the course of 2012 and 2013 visited Australia, attended several Liberty Fund conferences in the US, Europe, and Turkey, before heading to the Galapagos to preside over what was to be his last conference with the Mont Pelerin Society.

His relative neglect outside of conservative circles is perhaps not surprising given the entrenched parochial progressivism of Australian academe and its mainstream media. Yet Ken viewed himself as Australian, received a Centenary Medal in 2003, and visited the country regularly to give papers to the Centre for Independent Studies and the Institute for Public Affairs, and visit his son Nick and his many friends and admirers.

In 2003, he delivered the Menzies Lecture, examining the Australian psyche and considering whether Australia suffered from an identity crisis. He thought not, although he did detect the worrying drift of the media and academic elites towards what he termed Olympianism or a secular and salvationist moral universalism.

More importantly, this local neglect not only says something about Australia's self-regarding intellectual and political culture, it also obscures the extent to which Minogue's original cast of mind reflected his experience of Australia during and immediately after the Second World War. If the child is father of the man, then Sydney and particularly the eastern suburbs and the Cross forged Ken's characteristically droll, self-effacing style and his sceptical take on the world.

Ken was born in New Zealand in the otherwise undistinguished town of Palmerston North in September 1930. His parents moved to Sydney shortly after the outbreak of the war. From 1940 to 1946, he attended Darlinghurst Elementary School and Sydney Boys High before going up to Sydney University where he read arts and law. He graduated with a B.A. in 1950 and appears in the supplement to the university calendar for that year as a member of the university. As he observed in an extensive interview with Peter Coleman

conducted in 1996, and preserved in the National Library, he didn't really 'finish' his degree; he was, it seems, "at one stage doing a degree in law and finishing philosophy in Arts III". This perhaps reflected the fact that it was "an exciting time, and there were lots of ex-servicemen around" campus.

At the university he came under the influence of the philosopher John Anderson, who had, by the late 1940s, a well-deserved reputation for his commitment to free speech, secularism and anti-communism. As James Franklin observes, Anderson exercised a huge influence upon "several generations of students". Donald Horne, who had experienced it, thought "Anderson seemed the most important person at the University", the "main rebel, a renowned atheist,

not long ago a communist, censured by the New South Wales Parliament and by the University senate". He exerted a formative influence on the young Minogue's thinking and writing. As early as 1943, Anderson had observed the growing shift of government to collectivist solutions, which he condemned in his essay "The Servile State", a title echoed in Ken's last book, which also shared a very Andersonian concern with state dependency and democratic despotism. Very much involved in student journalism, at the expense of his studies, Ken wrote for the student paper *Honi Soit* as well as a short-lived free-thinking broadsheet, *Heresy*.

By 1951, however, he decided he needed "a pilgrimage to the Old World to see what it was like".

Again, as he observed to Peter Coleman, this had little to do with cultural cringe and more with Australian swagger. Indeed, Minogue came to contend that the cringe only crept into Australian culture when its progressive elites began to traduce its history. In fact, "talk of cultural cringe is itself a kind of cringe towards a set of much more fashionable left-wing nostrums". He thus roamed the docks of Sydney and got a job as a cabin boy on a boat bound for London via Odessa and Port Said.

He arrived in a London that was not exactly swinging. Ken pursued a short-lived career as a writer and sold stories to *London Opinion* and *The Star* before realising that "he couldn't live that way" and took up work as a secondary school supply teacher with the London Education Authority for eighteen months. By 1953 and contemplating returning to Sydney, he thought he should acquire a degree of one kind or another



Ken Minogue was an inspiring teacher, mentor, and friend to generations of students at the LSE.

Source of photograph unknown.

“to take back with me”. He applied for the master’s program at the London School of Economics but was turned down. Instead he enrolled for an evening B.Sc. programme there which he completed in three years, achieved first-class honours, married his first wife, Val, and had a son.

These developments and the subsequent offer of temporary lectureships first at Exeter University and then, at Michael Oakeshott’s invitation, at the LSE, cemented Minogue’s London connection. Ultimately, then, Ken’s tale is of two cities: Sydney and London. He spent the next forty years in the School of Government, progressing from an assistant lecturer in 1956 to a full professor in the late 1980s. If Anderson influenced Minogue’s early scepticism and concern for logic and free expression, it was Oakeshott’s thinking that subsequently influenced his distinctively conservative realism. Indeed, Ken was notionally registered as Oakeshott’s research student pursuing a doctorate on Burke. Although the LSE in the 1950s possessed a stellar cast of academic characters, with Karl Popper, Friedrich Hayek, and Maurice Cranston as well as Elie Kedourie, Ernest Gellner, and William Letwin, gracing its otherwise unprepossessing corridors, it was Oakeshott who exerted the prime influence.

As Ken later observed, “some of [Oakeshott’s] attitudes and postures, his love of freedom, his insistence on the uselessness of the academic, the distance of the academic world from the practical world — these seemed to fit in with my Andersonian prejudices quite well.”

Yet in other ways Oakeshott was a different and more sophisticated figure. What Ken derived from their long friendship was “a sense of the complexity of the world, and the way in which one set of understandings depended upon earlier understandings and judgements of the meaning of things”. In particular, as Minogue expressed it in a moving tribute, Oakeshott’s work was “original, profound, and pugnacious”. His reflections on the experience of modern European politics “left no cliché undisturbed”.

Oakeshott thought through “the Western tradition anew in all its aspects, and the understanding is animated by a frank disdain for the infatuation with servility which is often barely concealed in much modern theory and practice. Oakeshott may not have saved us from rationalism, but he has left us with no excuse for ignorance of its ravages.”

From the 1970s, Oakeshott was the key figure in what Ken termed a group of LSE conservative realists that included Shirley and Bill Letwin, and Elie Kedourie as well as Ken himself. They shared the view, he averred, “that the activity of conserving an established way of life” was the “central, indeed, virtually the defining concern of politics”. Conservatism in this realist sense was a disposition, rather than a plan. It recognised politics as a limited activity; it also recognised that freedom, in the modern Anglosphere, derived from membership of a civil association, a type of association constituted by nothing else but subscription to a set of rules.

As Margaret Thatcher observed in her pithy foreword to Ken’s edited volume *Conservative Realism* (1996), “the attitude of always looking to the State for solutions is the end of civilized society as we know it”. Although Thatcher’s Conservative government, which the LSE realists championed, sought to turn back this managerial tide, the

evolution of the state as a mechanism for making us morally good increased exponentially in the post-Cold War era of Third Way politics.

Summarising this development in “The Servile Mind”, Ken identified a worrying paradox: whilst democracy once meant a government accountable to the electorate, “our rulers now make us accountable to them”. “Most Western governments hate me smoking, or eating the wrong kind of food, or hunting foxes or eating too much, and these are merely the surface disapprovals ... We must face up to the grim fact that the rulers we elect are losing patience with us”.

In retrospect, the causes and consequences of this servile mentality in the modern West formed the core of Minogue’s *oeuvre*. Politics properly understood, as he showed in *Politics: A Very Short Introduction* (1995), is “the activity by which the framework” of a distinctively Western way of life is sustained. “It is not human life itself”, whilst political judgment entailed “a choice between finite possibilities”. Policy, in a political condition, did not emerge from a superior source of wisdom but from “a freely recognized competition between interests and arguments within a society”. Political argument rests on shifting judgments governed by prudence and necessity, partly because we are ignorant of present and future contingencies. Politics requires, therefore, a rhetoric of persuasion, where “conflict is resolved by the free discussion and free acceptance of whatever outcome emerges from constitutional procedure”.

As a connoisseur of this rhetoric and its evolution from the Graeco-Roman world to its recapitulation in the modern European state, Minogue was acutely sensitive to the manner of its contemporary erosion. More precisely, he addressed the problem of confusing politics, properly understood, as “a pursuit of intimations”, with the distorting consequences of those who reduce politics to the pursuit of a rational, transformative and ultimately utopian plan. As he explained in *Conservative Realism*, “what the conservative realist knows is that utopianism feeds upon itself”.

However, to an elite, postmodern and post-enlightenment sensibility, utopianism was more attractive than a politics of finite possibilities. The lineaments of modern utopianism Ken first disclosed in *The Liberal Mind* (1963). Here it took the form, as he noted in the preface to the Liberty Fund edition (1999), of “a melodrama of oppressors and victims”. Consequently, “the generic man of liberal thought is like a window dresser’s dummy — merely a vehicle for invoking hatred or tears”. Liberal elites of the Cold War era, unlike their more robust nineteenth-century precursors, entered the compassion industry. The new liberalism embraced the pain of classes of people, usually minorities, both nationally and internationally, the solution to whose oppression in modern liberal thought and practice required the transformation of the prevailing state of things by a machinery of distribution. As he noted in a prescient 1991 essay on “Virtue, Social Justice and Moral Identity”, the project of the now academically dominant political philosophy of liberal normativism “combines the Titanic ambition to put on unassailable foundations a scheme of justice which is no less than a complete blueprint of social life”. In its most recent post-Cold War manifestation, nothing is beyond liberalism’s capacious maw.

This new liberalism sets out “in the Year Zero from a bare and characterless place. The place we have left behind has emerged out of our character and desires and many of us are attached to it”. “The place to which we go,” Ken observed sceptically, “we know only that academic theorists know it to be just”. The liberal mind, then, replaced history with a saga of oppression, informed by a curious mixture of cynicism regarding past conduct and sentimentality concerning the generically oppressed. “Both attitudes,” he observed, “dehumanize people by turning them into caricatures; whereas the caricatures of the cynic generate hatred and contempt, the caricatures of the sentimentalist provoke tears”. Anatomising this character further in his Menzies Lecture, he contended that “the damp smell of moralism” had, by the 1960s, pervaded “the solid oak of our inheritance”.

As a self-declared “purblind reactionary”, Minogue had resisted the student radicalism of the late 1960s and he had little time for what he once termed “the long polysyllabic howl of sociology”. One of sociology’s most notable howlers, Anthony Giddens, assumed the directorship of the LSE in 1997 and one of his academic disciples, David Held, occupied the Graham Wallis Chair of Politics in the School of Government in 2000.

What Giddens and Held represented was the antithesis of “the concept of a university” that Ken had outlined in 1974 in a book of the same name. He considered the LSE’s subsequent embrace of ‘Third Way’ thinking, global democracy, and policy-driven grant-getting, a form of rationalism that could only end in corruption. The LSE’s embrace of the ideology of global democracy saw Giddens in dialogue with Muammar Gaddafi in 2008 whilst Professor Held supervised Saif al-Islam Gaddafi’s doctoral thesis. In return Gaddafi contributed over \$3 million to Held’s Centre for the Study of Global Governance, only for the Libyan regime to collapse in 2011, taking down with it the reputation of the LSE.

Preoccupied with the role of the university in cultivating thoughtfulness and intellectual independence, Ken concluded that, since the revolutionary student movement of the 1960s and the proliferation of feminist, media and ‘European studies’, as well as purportedly ‘critical’ studies of terrorism and security, ideology had perverted an academic tradition by making it the instrument of a practical political purpose. Understanding, he argued, was different from recommending. However, the policy-directed and utility-maximising view of education that has dominated the vice-chancelleries of Australian and U.K. universities since the 1990s has only facilitated the drift of education into the advocacy industry. This development, he contended, distorted academic standards. Ken’s essays and journalism after 1997 explored how Anglospheric academe had replaced understanding with a transnational Olympianism reinforced by national self-loathing.

After he retired from the LSE Ken became, if anything, more preoccupied with politics as a limited sphere of activity and the manner of its degeneration into despotism and servility through a media-driven democratically-induced morbidity. He was less attached to academe, however, and the legacy of the London school of conservative realism was lost to the Giddens and post-Giddens-era LSE. Ironically, it had been easier to argue a conservative libertarian case in academe

during the Cold War than it was in the new era of political correctness and the servile mindset that it fashioned.

Instead, it was libertarian or conservative think-tanks like Civitas, the Institute for Social Affairs, the Policy Studies Institute, and the anti-European Bruges Group, of which he became President in 1991, and latterly the Mont Pelerin Society, that benefited from Ken’s insight and sustained his analysis of the perversely sentimental moralising that characterised twenty-first-century ideology. Through these institutions and an international network of conservative writers and thinkers whom he had befriended in the Cold War — such as Owen Harries, Deepak Lal, Robert Conquest, and John O’Sullivan — he sustained a distinctively conservative and sceptical voice into the post-Cold War era.

With his second wife, Bev, he regularly hosted dinner parties at their home in West London that featured an array of conservative talent from Australia, the United States as well as the UK. As his stepdaughter Jo Henderson observed, “he thought, she gathered, he wrote, she cooked, together they created a haven of ideas and conversation conducted in a spirit of good humour while the wine flowed, anyone who wanted to smoke, did, and irreverence was encouraged so long as it was both amusing and thought provoking”.

Any given evening might find the likes of Roger Kimball, John O’Sullivan, Andrew Alexander, Ruth Dudley Edwards, as well as the odd academic, writer or musician discoursing on topics that ranged from the state of modern democratic politics (not good) to the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, the musicals of Gershwin and Irving Berlin or Hollywood films of the 1940s.

Ken Minogue, then, possessed the rare ability to stand back from any event or fashionable enthusiasm and appraise it dispassionately. He attributed this to his early development, “being a New Zealander in Australia and an Australian in Britain, somebody who’s spent most of his life in Britain back in Australia and so on, you’re always slightly distanced, but only very marginally distanced from the people you’re connected with and I suppose this soothes any sense that you don’t totally belong”. He found this alienation satisfying, a personal version, he thought, of Toynbee’s theory of challenge and response, a tiny challenge provoking “a possibly interesting response”. This fed the ability always to present a fresh perspective but rarely judge. The most damning condemnation of a policy or an idea would be that it was “terribly unsound”.

Ken considered political philosophy a conversation, and within it, his distinctive voice rose above the hubbub of progressive orthodoxy and the corrupting politics of abstract compassion. As one of his students put it, there is monologue, dialogue, and Minogue. He regarded it impossible to think lucidly if you couldn’t write clear prose, and he spoke as he wrote, in well-formed sentences. Although he paid little attention to his own archive, his various essays and books retain the flavour of his thought, enabling future thinkers to appreciate the style, wit and moral prescience of a great Anglospheric philosopher. ■

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Leonardo Polo (1926-2013)

Fernando Múgica

Don Leonardo has died and left us. And there are many people — colleagues, former students, and those who find a living font of inspiration in his philosophical thought — who, with his loss, realize how much we are in his debt and how much the department of philosophy at the University of Navarra had its origins in him, as well as constant support. I will discuss a few aspects of his legacy that I consider particularly noteworthy and which continue to enjoy full force.

Don Leonardo [as he was affectionately called by his friends and admirers] loved philosophy and had a liking for theory. He convinced those who got close to him to ‘submit to the experience of thinking’ and to dare to ask questions. He taught us that every question has meaning and adds value — especially when the exercise of philosophical thought is directed not at destructive criticism but at criticism for constructive improvement. As long as one is willing to go beyond the theoretical level, no question is preposterous. He was eager to invigorate souls and take them along paths of questioning in search of truth.

I think this eagerness presented itself as a way of thinking in which the claim to truth and the encounter with the philosophical experience were one and the same thing. That is why he always taught and practiced the belief that philosophical criticism should be used to reveal the desire for truth enclosed in the very act of thinking on the part of everyone. It was meaningless to say that the theoretical act lacked all possible relationship to truth.

His constant concern for the education of his students, doctoral candidates, and younger university professors was complimented — perhaps even strengthened — by his respect for personal freedom. Don Leonardo never tried to win anyone over; he did not seek personal followers or fleeting loyalties. The paucity of praise and the extremely sober enthusiasm that he expressed for the work that we, his young students, did — whether they were oral or written statements — were not part of some strategy of detachment. Rather, they formed part of an educational concept — one

that led him to repeat again and again the now famous expression: “all success is premature”. Success is one of the forms of recognition that young people seek for a sense of security and it acts as a “behavioural reinforcement of a psychological nature”.

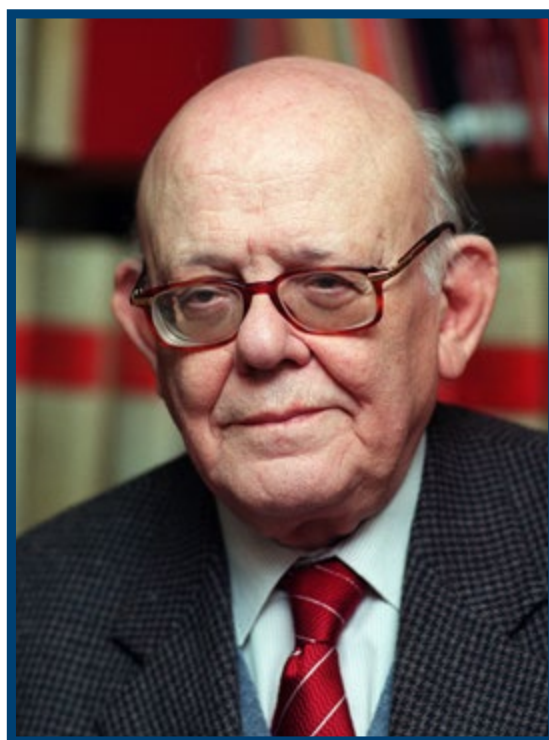
As a philosopher, Don Leonardo lived for a time with little or insufficient recognition by others. I think this led him to find his own sense of security by deepening his approach both to his own work as well as to his role as philosophical teacher and adviser in his relationships with others. His insistence that his ideas did not enjoy an “author’s copyright” may be subject to various interpretations. In the context of this particular

tribute and in accordance with my main argument, I suggest it should be understood in this way: “make these ideas your own only if you understand them and if they convince you but not because they are mine”.

The presence of Don Leonardo in the department of philosophy was legendary, tangible, friendly, calm — and silent. I doubt anyone was ever afraid of knocking on his door out of fear of bothering him. Although he spent long hours alone, studying and writing, he never exhibited — nor did he make others feel — that he had any desire to be left alone. On the contrary, when someone sat and talked with him, he soon lost track of time. I think many of us, with the perspective that time gives, now appreciate the great generosity — extravagance, even — with which he lavished his time on us. He made us feel as if he had nothing else to do but to help you at that moment.

In a similar way, I appreciate the great love for personal freedom he exercised in a very unique way: paving and helping us navigate the road that goes from close to distant friendship. Don Leonardo knew how to gracefully accept the fact that our paths in life would cross according to the changing rhythms, steps, proximity, and distance that occur with the different phases of life. It is characteristic of a great soul that he knows how to love without absorbing; to help with true selflessness and with his entire being, unconditionally; to be genuinely concerned for what might happen to someone — and yet to let him be and allow him continue on his way.

Magnanimity teaches serenity and respect in dealing with others (especially the young). I never



Leonardo Polo at the University of Navarra.

*Photograph courtesy of the Instituto de Estudios
Filosóficos Leonardo Polo in Málaga, Spain.*



Leonardo Polo was honoured by the president of the government of Navarra in 2008. *Source of photograph unknown.*

heard him complain of a friend's disloyalty because that person had grown distant. And that is because he really loved and lived personal freedom — with all its unexpected consequences.

Without a doubt, one of his guiding passions was to combine this love of freedom with his desire for a harmonious coexistence within the department of philosophy at the University of Navarra. Since he was present from the department's inception, it was logical for him to have had this combination — of love of freedom and desire for harmony — present there as well. But even though he maintained a deep respect for the past, he did not depend on these memories; "the best is yet to come", he repeated continually. This stance — one foot rooted in the University's origins and the other striding towards the future — allowed him to fully understand changes, anticipate and solve problems, and provide solutions that have shown to be effective.

He also knew how to accept with humility and grace when others — much younger and in some cases trained by him — took on managerial tasks that impacted him. He always insisted on avoiding labels and clichés when referring to colleagues, and through his actions he taught me that unity is the natural — though arduous — result of loving *both* personal freedom and the natural differences in the thoughts, modes of being, and behaviours of all human beings. He knew how to mediate when necessary, and always did so with respect and sensitivity, without invoking "gallons of seniority". However, when the proper consensus or understanding of a problem was required, the weight of his intellectual and moral authority was felt.

Don Leonardo, always a good 'university man', lived through the University's crisis, when its future

as an institution of higher education was in question. He was concerned yet hopeful, and there are numerous texts and interventions that demonstrate this. But perhaps he was more explicit in his personal and oral teachings.

It is often said that great spirits have a capacity for foresight; I think in his case, it's true. He anticipated with remarkable acuity the need for the University's administration to balance the roles of executives, managers, and academics, without one group benefitting at the expense of the other two; he cared enough to make us appreciate the role — and the undeniable place — of philosophy in the whole of knowledge and within the University; and he endeavoured to make sure we continuously preserved the University's research activities, as well as its doctoral programme, and the quality of doctoral theses. Although it is too much to sum up, I think these three aspects summarize much of his efforts on behalf of the University.

A perfect expression of his commitment to the University's doctoral programme was his effort to implement cooperative agreements at the doctoral level with various Latin American universities, and his personal involvement in these negotiations from 1985 until his last trip to the University of Piura [in Peru] in 2002. He spent many hours talking to his closest collaborators abroad, observing first-hand each of the universities and their programmes, and following with great interest the regulatory and administrative aspects required for these agreements.

I cannot, nor do I want to, ignore the one aspect of Don Leonardo that for me stands out above all others and which explains almost everything: He was a Christian with a deep spiritual life. How often in the many trips we made together would he collect himself in silence while I drove! I surmised that he had begun to pray. Indeed, his comments and reactions in the face of adversity demonstrated Christian hope to those of us around him.

Rest in peace, Don Leonardo — you who bequeathed so much to us and who was so generous with the gifts he received. ■

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Not for Turning

Robin Harris

I started working for the Conservative Party in 1978, but I only got to know Mrs. Thatcher herself in the early 1980s when I was a special adviser. As Prime Minister, she used to have a series of rather disorganized and unsatisfactory meetings with the different political advisers, some wanting to curry favour and some just feeling embarrassed and so on.

She and I had an argument. It was not a very important argument. On this occasion, I think she was wrong. It was to do with criminal justice policy, I think. So we had this back and forth, and she took notice that this upstart seemed to have a word or two to say for himself. That was often the way you got Mrs. Thatcher's notice: You had an argument with her. She was a good arguer. She liked an argument, and if you said something that interested her, she took an interest in you. And so from time to time, we did come across each other. I was in the Treasury, and then I was in the Home Office at the time of the miners' strike, which was an important and difficult time, and then in 1985, the directorship of the Conservative Research Department fell vacant.

The chairman of the party and the other senior people in the party very sensibly didn't really want me, so they said that they wanted to be transparent, as the word is, and they must advertise the post. So she said

OK, you can advertise the post. You can interview all the people you want as long as, in the end, Robin gets the job. So of course Robin did get the job, and Robin was very grateful for getting the job. And from 1985, she and I did grow quite close. I grew particularly close, really, through helping her with her speeches.

Now, with Mrs. Thatcher, speechwriting was very important — not just that she thought that speeches were important, as Ronald Reagan thought they were important because they knew it was important to communicate and to persuade people, but also because she used these speeches to have wide-ranging arguments in order to work out what she really thought. And not just about the particular subject of that speech. Let's say it was a domestic policy speech; she could suddenly start talking about, as I remember she did, the Strategic Defence Initiative, or whether interest rates were really right, and so on, and you learned a great deal.

So I got to know her well, and of course I was there when she was removed, and I made her ejection my own because I wasn't prepared to serve under anybody else. So we both left Downing Street at broadly the same time, and after that, I helped her write her memoirs.

This was an important experience because she discussed her early life. She also discussed what she really thought of various individuals. So although I really knew "late Thatcher", as it were, from 1985 on,



Lady Thatcher with President Reagan at a meeting at Camp David in December 1984.

Photograph courtesy of the White House Photographic Office.

personally, I also got from her a pretty good insight into her early life, what had brought her into politics, what she did in those years.

This explains the balance of my book where there is obviously more on the late Thatcher period than from the early period before 1985. On the other hand, you'll find an account of the Falklands and what she thought about the war and about some of those who let her down during it, and you'll find many of those things, as it were, from the "horse's mouth". It is based on the personal experience of knowing her and sharing with her some triumphs and some disasters as well, because they both go together in politics.

Understanding the Reality of Thatcher

It's also true. I think that the role of a biographer is not very different from that of an historian, and an historian should, above all, write the truth. Obviously, he can't tell every aspect of the truth because a book would be too long, and also — legitimately, I think — if some people are still alive, there are some things a biographer should not say: not many things in my case, because I think many of them deserve to be said, but there are still a few things that you won't say. Generally, I think it was very important indeed to have a proper reckoning and a true understanding of the reality of Margaret Thatcher.

I'll tell you why. I was never very worried about the left-wing image of Thatcher as a mad axe woman who was destroying public services, following blindly in Reagan's wake, and generally behaving in a peculiar manner under the influence of foreign, particularly American, ideologues. That is just nonsense, and nobody really believes that now, apart from a few immature students and old commies. So that distortion is of no great interest.

There is also what I would call a right-wing view. This is good about her motives and understanding her but sometimes doesn't grasp the limits to what she did and the degree of prudence and pragmatism which she showed in practice.

And then there is a more insidious view, which I think was very evident in the wake of the funeral. That was the way in which the establishment—including

many senior people in the Conservative Party—which had really never liked her, and indeed on many occasions, as over the turbulent miners' strike, had rather disowned her, and which was really glad to see the back of her in 1990, as soon as she was dead wanted to absorb her, to own her, to sanitize her, and to make her part of them. Well, she wasn't part of them. She was a radical. She was not a left-wing radical, but she was a conservative radical, and radicalism upsets people.

The great difference between radicals in politics and old-fashioned Tories in politics is that the old-fashioned Tories want a quiet life. They want to be something. But the radicals don't expect a quiet life, and they want to do something. She wanted to do something. She wanted to make a difference.



Thatcher departing Washington, DC, in March 1981.

Photograph courtesy of the US Department of Defense.

Thatcher's Character

Her character was in some respects simple, in some respects complex. That's to say that she was a very direct person. She was a very honest person. She nearly always said what she thought and she would say it in her own language. When she was away from a speechwriter, she spoke in a very direct manner. That was how she was brought up. She wasn't a London girl; she was a very well-educated and clever woman, but she wasn't a metropolitan, and she didn't affect a sophistication that she didn't possess.

She was a good judge of events, but not always such a good judge of people. She was a good judge of events in two respects. First of all, it's very important in politics to distinguish the big things from the small things. You

have to know what's really essential, what you just have to get through. Secondly, you also have to understand timing. You have to understand that you can't fight every battle at the same time, because you'll lose. She was very good on timing, for example, in dealing with the miners.

The National Union of Miners (NUM) had brought down the previous conservative government. It was thought that it was impossible to bring any kind of economic rationale to mining, and also there was a tradition of violence, which is quite contrary to the rather cozy image of "life down pit"—which was also pretty unpleasant, actually—and the NUM were a very

dangerous opponent. It was quite clear that you were never going to reform the trade unions as a whole, and you were never going to make Britain a place that could be prosperous and attract investment from the world as a whole, until you could deal with the miners.

But in 1981, a slightly inadequate Minister of Energy found himself at loggerheads with the miners and on the eve of an imminent miners' strike. He expected her to go ahead and back him, but she would not go ahead because the preparations had not been made.

The important thing is that the coal, coke, or whatever the fuel is that you're going to use has to be close to where you need it. The idea that you've actually got some great big pile of coal so you're safe is just rubbish. Mass picketing would actually stop you being able to move that fuel, so you actually have to have the coal at the place that you're going to use it. The other thing is that the police have to be equipped to deal with what they're going to face. We weren't prepared or equipped in 1981, so she totally backed down. And it was not until 1984 that she was ready.

She didn't provoke it, but she knew it would happen, and so for a year there was a miners' strike which in the end failed. And if that miners' strike had not failed, Britain could not have succeeded economically.

I'll give you another example: the battles with Europe over "our money," as she described it. She took a very, very hard line in the early '80s about getting back at least a share of what we were contributing to the European budget. They hated it; they were frightened of it. The Europeans said that it was a disgrace that she should talk about our British money when it was really theirs, and she then threatened to legislate against the payment of this money. In fact, she compromised, and she compromised just at the right moment so that we got two-thirds of our contribution back. Until Tony Blair threw much of that away, it was the basis of our financial relationship in Europe. She succeeded; she was a good negotiator.

Personal Relationships

As for people, well, I think that sometimes she had favourites. I suppose you might say I benefited from that, but I wasn't really a favourite in that sense. She just liked discussing things with me. But she did have favourites, and she did take against people, and when she took against people in the cabinet, it was very difficult from then on because she sometimes treated them badly. If you and a senior cabinet colleague have had a long-standing disagreement over some matter, and you've had a sharp argument, and probably your supporters have been briefing against each other, I'm afraid these tensions do grow. It was a weakness of hers, I think, that she allowed that sometimes to become too personal.

But having said that, she was also herself very kind. She was one of the kindest people I've ever met, and she was thoughtful. An intelligent person who's

kind really tries to find out what is wrong if somebody is looking glum or you've seen the wife is no longer around. You ask about it and do something — and she was very good at that.

She was extremely kind to the most humble people. If you were important, watch out. If you were an equal, then you had to look after yourself. But if you were not an equal, she was extremely considerate and kind, and she was very, very fond of children.

She was also extremely kind to people who made a mess of their lives. In politics, people are very good at making messes of their lives. And so often, let's say at Christmastime, there were people who because their personal arrangements had all collapsed, as happens in life, were on their own. She would find out who those people were — politicians, obviously—and she would see that they were invited to Chequers, the Prime Minister's country residence, for Christmas, and they would find that they had Christmas presents as well. That was the sort of person she was.

The "Vigorous Virtues"

But, of course, kindness isn't actually what you require to run a country. You've got to have other qualities, and she did have those qualities. As well as judgment, I would say that her main quality was courage. She was one of the bravest people that I've ever encountered. I think it's Aristotle who says somewhere that the bravery of a woman is different from the bravery of a man, and there is something in this, but it's also true that the bravery of a politician is different, let's say, from the bravery of a frontline soldier. It's a different sort of bravery, but it's a real bravery.

I should say of her also that she had physical courage and not just moral courage. It took a lot of physical courage to go to Northern Ireland at the time of the Troubles, down to South Armagh when you could well be — probably were — within range of a sniper, and she was wearing fatigues and so on. These were very dangerous times.

It was extremely dangerous in October 1984 at the Grand Hotel in Brighton. At 2 a.m. approximately on the 12th of October in Brighton, she was working in her suite of rooms with her private secretary on the next day's party conference speech. She would work and work and work all night until she was completely fatigued, have a bath and a two-hour sleep, and then get up and deliver the speech. That's just how she lived.

Anyway, she was working like that on her speech, and suddenly there was an almighty bang. Well, bang; she put down her draft and her pen, got up and to her private secretary's horror walked straight into the dark bedroom, the sound of all the masonry falling, to see that her husband was all right. If in fact she had been sitting in the bathroom, and she might have — any sensible person would've been cleaning their teeth and about to go to bed—she would've been dead. She showed complete self-possession; she was only interested in whether her husband was all right. That takes guts.

In politics, you've got to have guts. You've got to have character. She believed in character. She believed in the virtues. She sometimes spoke about the Victorian virtues. Somebody who wrote about her and knew her, Shirley Letwin, in an interesting book about Mrs. T, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism*, talks about the "vigorous virtues", and Mrs. Thatcher in many ways represented in her whole life and her style of politics these vigorous virtues. That character really saw her through. Moral courage was required in trying to get through what even most of the cabinet thought was a crazy experiment in monetarism. They didn't believe in it; they wanted to obstruct it.

Curing the Sick Man of Europe

So we come to the legacy. Britain in 1979 was an economic basket case. It was known widely as the sick man of Europe, and we were almost as sick as the Ottomans. We were sick to such an extent that people believed that nothing could be done. Britain could not be run without the agreement of the trade unions. It was impossible to control inflation without a prices and incomes policy. It was impossible to denationalize areas of British industry. It was impossible to reduce subsidies. It was impossible to compete in world markets. It was just impossible.

In fact, worse than anything else was the culture of excuses — that culture of excuses, which I think the Anglo-Saxon world specializes in somehow, and it's probably our worst enemy. That attitude had to be defeated, and she believed that it was possible to defeat it, and of course, by our policies we did. We denationalized, we cut taxes, we cut regulation, we did bring down inflation through controlling the money supply. We did all the things which were "impossible", and as a result, Britain did reverse its economic decline.

There is no doubt about that: even the Left now accepts that the statistics show it. Compare the 1970s and the 1980s. This is judging one economic cycle with another, so we're talking, as far as the '70s are concerned, of '73 to '79. In the 1970s, the British economy grew by less than 1% a year on average. In the 1980s, it grew by 2.25%. That may seem a very small difference, but anybody who knows anything about compound interest and the J-curve effect knows that that is a dramatic turnaround with a large effect. That was against the international trend, because world economies did not generally grow faster in the '80s than in the '70s, and the basis of this transformation was an upsurge in productivity.

Winning the Cold War

The final thing I must mention is victory in the Cold War. Margaret Thatcher might've claimed that she, herself, won the Cold War. It's been said by others but not by her. She said that she had played a useful role in helping Ronald Reagan, the Pope, and all the imprisoned members of the captive nations to win the Cold War.

That slightly underrated, I should say, her

contribution because it was, in fact, large. It was very important to Reagan to have her support, and it wasn't just that Britain had its upgraded nuclear deterrent, that we were spending the right amount on weaponry, that we allowed the Americans to use our bases in order to bomb Libya in 1986, and so on. It was much more, I think, the moral and intellectual support that she gave Reagan on the international stage that was crucial. If I were to compare the two, I would say that Mrs. Thatcher was nimbler in her approach and that Reagan was steadier. I think you need both nimbleness and steadiness if you're going to win battles in international arenas, and she provided the nimbleness.

They were political friends. Political friendship is an odd concept. We can understand personal friendship, but political friends have not only to like one another, but also to share a very similar ideological outlook. And they did. They both were real conservatives, both committed Cold Warriors who hated Communism and socialism. They were also outsiders in their parties. The Republican establishment was very wary of Reagan, let's remember, and the Conservative Party establishment was very wary — even warier — of Mrs. Thatcher. Yes, they had a lot in common.

But she was different in one respect, which it is important that Americans should understand. Although she loved America, she loved Britain more. She was a British patriot. She loved America because she thought she understood American values and the American dream, but also because she thought that America represented in many ways the best of the long Anglo-Saxon contribution to the world. But when it really came to it, it was British national interests that mattered most to her, and the clashes that she had with Reagan — sometimes he was right, sometimes she was right — are the proof of that. We in Mrs. Thatcher's day were nobody's patsy and nobody's poodle. Nor should Britain be anybody's patsy or poodle.

There was unfinished business by the time she left office, particularly as regards Europe. She regretted that. But I think that in those 11 and a half years — those turbulent, difficult, triumphant, sometimes sad and disappointing, but in the end satisfying 11 and a half years — she did enough to justify what the crowd outside St. Paul's clearly felt and what those who answered that opinion poll clearly felt: She won for herself the title of the greatest postwar British Prime Minister. ■

*Dr. Harris served during the 1980s as an adviser at the UK Treasury and Home Office, as Director of the Conservative Party Research Department, and as a member of Prime Minister Thatcher's Downing Street Policy Unit. He continued to advise Lady Thatcher after she left office. In addition to Not for Turning: The Life of Margaret Thatcher (2013), Dr. Harris is the author of Dubrovnik: A History (2003), and other books. **This speech** was delivered at the Heritage Foundation on September 24, 2013. It is published with the kind permission of both the author and the Heritage Foundation.*

Online Education for Liberty — at LibertasU

Peter C. More

With the greatest universities in the world taken over by ‘politically correct’ faculty, new online schools offering a classical curriculum in a real-time setting now offer a solution. In addition, on-line schools have eliminated the costs of operating a standard, physical campus, which has translated into lower tuition, and have provided students — regardless of age or location — with the opportunity to study with first-rate educators from around the world.

What is LibertasU?

Founded in 2011, LibertasU is an independent and non-sectarian private online educational institution devoted to making high-quality, liberal arts courses available to anyone with a computer and an Internet connection. However, LibertasU is not a typical on-line school where students simply log in, read a course outline, prepare and hand in assignments, and have occasional discussions via email with other students and the lecturer. Nor is it a video-conference with a group of ‘talking heads’. Rather, LibertasU is a school where all students, along with the lecturer, are together in 3-D virtual classrooms.

The platform features multi-user, virtual environments in which both students and teachers are represented by human-looking ‘avatars’, which they navigate through a virtual campus — walking through virtual spaces, entering classrooms, interacting with others, sitting, standing, and gesturing. The platform also has full voice integration, rich and immersive environments, presentation facilities that support slides, audio and video, and access to supporting on-line material. And to make the classes even more memorable, lectures are often held in appropriate environments. Students may, for example, discuss Plato in a classical Greek temple or Adam Smith in an 18th century coffee house.

In addition, since educational experiences at a physical university often take place *before* or *after* class, and in casual interactions in common areas, LibertasU makes virtual ‘common areas’ available where students can meet informally or form discussion groups. Everyone sees and can speak to any other avatars present in the same virtual space, so that discussions can take place in real-time. This is *the LibertasU experience*.

Academic Offerings

LibertasU has a senior staff, having named philosopher Roger Scruton to the position of Dean and Thomas Lindsey as President. And other highly qualified lecturers — like John Alvis and Robert Royal — have also joined the faculty.

New classes are offered every other month. Unless otherwise specified, classes are given once a week over seven weeks, in 110-minute periods. Some of the upcoming classes for the ‘semester’ that takes place from March to April include:

Dante: Divine Comedy, Divine Spirituality: The Inferno. This is a three-part class given by Robert Royal, the founder and president of the Faith & Reason Institute in Washington, D.C.

What is American Democracy? This class is given by Thomas Lindsay, director of the Texas Public Policy Foundation’s Center for Higher Education and former president of Shimer College.

The Enemy Within: The Portrayal of Espionage and Subversion in the Contemporary Popular Culture. This class is given by James Bowman, a resident scholar at the Ethics & Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., and a writer at the *The American Spectator*.

Shakespeare: The Supreme Dramatist — Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Henry V. This class is given by John Alvis, professor of English and director of American Studies at the University of Dallas.

LibertasU has many other courses planned for the future. These include: *The Rule of the Best and Brightest: Plato’s Republic; Principles of Government in the Hebrew Bible; The Literature of Liberty; John Stuart Mill: The Prophet of Modernity; The Passionate Muse: 17th Century English Poetry; Rhetoric: the Art of Persuasion; and Transcendence in Art and Music.*

More Information

You can visit a sample classroom in the ‘Visitor Zone’ of LibertasU to get a sense of what the virtual, 3-D environments are like. To do so, you will first have to create a free LibertasU account at: www.libertasu.com

As the Dean of LibertasU, Roger Scruton, has said: “Our lecturers want to discuss great ideas with students. We believe that books should be read with a sense of delight, as students connect, with pleasure, with the best that has been written or said”.

Mr. More is an educator and freelance writer based in London.



Report from the 2013 Vanenburg Meeting

The Editors

The 8th Annual Vanenburg Meeting took place last year, from Friday, July 5, to Monday, July 8, at the Park Hotel in Průhonice, in the green belt outside of Prague. Sponsored by the Center for European Renewal, the Meeting focused on the question: “Literature and the Conservative Cause.”

The annual gathering once again brought scholars, writers, lawyers, and philosophers together for a weekend of presentations, discussions, and debates. For four days, participants reflected on and discussed literature, the role of the humanities, the importance of political virtue, the state of conservatism in Europe, and the roots of Western civilization. As is tradition, the evenings were reserved for ‘hospitality,’ fellowship, and vintage wine tasting.

Introductory remarks on the first day were made by the secretary of the Vanenburg Society, Jonathan Price, followed by a welcome from local host, Roman Joch, executive director of the Civic Institute in Prague. As explained during this welcome, each day of the meeting would be structured around seminars, for in-depth consideration of a given work of literature, and sessions, during which a paper or lecture was given followed by questions and discussions.

Session I on Friday afternoon began after the welcome with a lecture on “Ancient Wisdom, Modern Knowledge” given by Hungarian academic, Andras Láncki. His comments considered the role of philosophy in the context of the ongoing European crisis. Invoking Aristotle, he reminded participants that “before discussing the ideal form of government, we must agree on what the good life should be”.

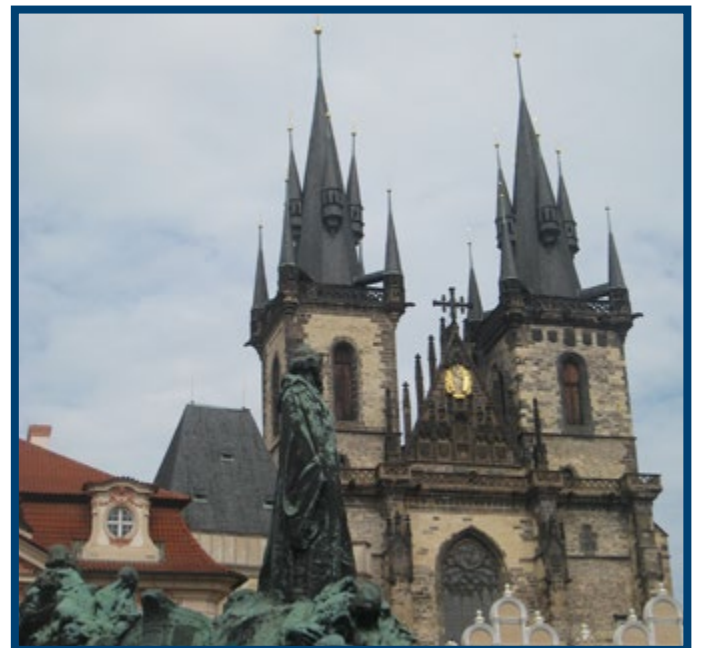
This session was followed by two seminars during the rest of the day. Polish MEP Ryszard Legutko addressed the question, “Should poets be expelled from the conservative republic?”, which examined some of the arguments in Book X of Plato’s *Republic*; and Hungarian academic Ferenc Hoercher considered whether “conservative politics implies a conservative taste in art?”, which built on the main points of T.S. Eliot’s essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”.



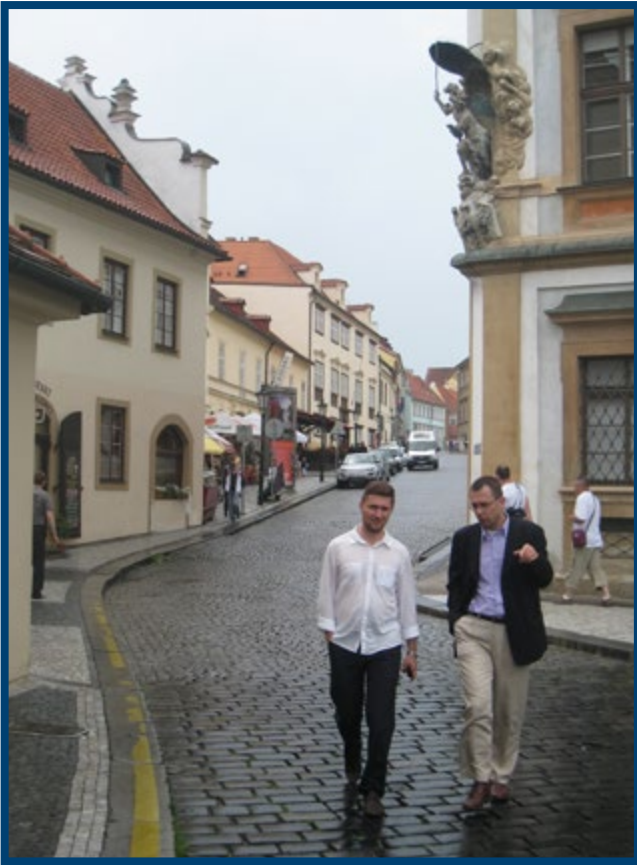
Andreas Kinneging and Roger Scruton alongside members and invited guests of the Vanenburg Society. *All photographs courtesy of members of the Vanenburg Society.*



The Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Vitus in Prague. Its full name is St. Vitus, St. Wenceslas, and St. Adalbert Cathedral. The present-day structure was founded in 1344 under Charles IV, King of Bohemia and, later, Holy Roman Emperor.



The Jan Hus Memorial with the Church of Mother of God in front of Týn in the background. Construction of the present structure began in the 14th century.



Two participants continue a discussion on the streets of Prague during an afternoon tour of the city.

Saturday began with a lively seminar devoted to a close examination of Benjamin Constant's 1816 classic, *Adolphe*. The seminar, led by Dutch legal philosopher, Andreas Kinneging, took in many questions but was focused on the provocative question: "is love conservative?" This was followed by a session led by Dutch academic Melvin Schut on the decline of the university, the formative role of the humanities, and the importance and role of literature in the curriculum.

After lunch, participants boarded a bus bound for the centre of Prague, where they enjoyed a tour



The dial of the Prague Astronomical Clock located in Old Town Square. First installed in 1410, it is the oldest working astronomical clock in the world.

of the medieval city. As one participant remarked, the unique beauty and majesty of Prague seemed to stand out in relief at every corner, with fountains, ancient towers, dark spires, and golden steeples emerging from the mist.

After the tour, philosopher Roger Scruton led a seminar that examined Rainer Maria Rilke's enigmatic *Duineser Elegien* (1923). While not usually considered a 'conservative' work, Rilke's poems, as some participants noted, seems to force readers to confront something greater than themselves — namely, mortality and death. In this, they can be said to be conservative.

On Sunday, after Mass at a local parish church, participants attended the final seminar. Led by Jonathan Price, discussions focused on Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and explored whether men need to fear the gods in order for there to be justice. On the final day, a board meeting was held to discuss the agenda for the 2014 Vanenburg Meeting.

As usual, in the evenings, there were opportunities



Participants from the Netherlands and the Czech Republic during one of the afternoon sessions.



Participants from across Europe gathered to discuss various pre-assigned readings.



Discussions about literature and ideology, law and justice, ethics and morality took place during formal sessions indoors — but continued during breaks outside, over lunch and dinner, and sometimes late into the night.

to listen to individual ‘Country Reports’ given by members of the Vanenburg Society and invited guests. These Reports included political developments in Austria, new policies and challenges faced by the government of Poland, the position of conservative political parties in Sweden, the latest news about cultural decline in the UK, the international pressure on the conservative government of Hungary, recent political scandals in the Czech Republic, and the wayward drift of the Hollande government in France and recent developments regarding same-sex marriage.

The 2013 Meeting proved once again that there are vibrant intellectual conservative movements across the continent, which can still play a role in the cultural renewal of Europe. The ‘true destiny’ of Europe, said one French participant, is still alive — and this was evidenced once more for a few days in the outskirts of Prague among thirty academics, scholars, lawyers, and writers.

The annual Vanenburg Meeting is organized by the Center for European Renewal (CER) based in The Hague. The first Vanenburg Meeting was held at *Kasteel De Vanenburg* in Putten, The Netherlands, in the Spring of 2006. Since then, Vanenburg Meetings have been held in Vienna (2007), Madrid (2008), Budapest (2009), Tyniec (2010), Leuven (2011), Cirencester (2012), and Prague (2013).

About the CER

Founded in 2007, the CER is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, educational and cultural organization dedicated to the Western ideal of a civilized, humane, and free society. To this end, the CER seeks to nurture in successive generations of Europeans an understanding of and devotion to the truth and wisdom embedded in the Western intellectual and moral tradition.

The CER is organized as a charitable foundation (*stichting*) under the laws of the Netherlands and is headquartered in The Hague. It is active across Europe and hopes to appeal to anyone around the world who supports the idea and ideals of Western civilization.

The CER does not receive or accept monetary support from any government. Thus, donations are critical to help the CER advance its key initiatives: the annual Vanenburg Meetings of European conservatives, book publishing, student outreach, initiatives to strengthen local organizations in all European countries, and the publication of *The European Conservative*.

All donations made to help sustain the CER come entirely from people who share a commitment to “strengthen the Western tradition in Europe”. For more information about how to support the CER’s work, please contact: info@europeanrenewal.org ■



A group photograph of participants at the 2013 Vanenburg Meeting near Prague, Czech Republic. *Photograph courtesy of the Center for European Renewal.*

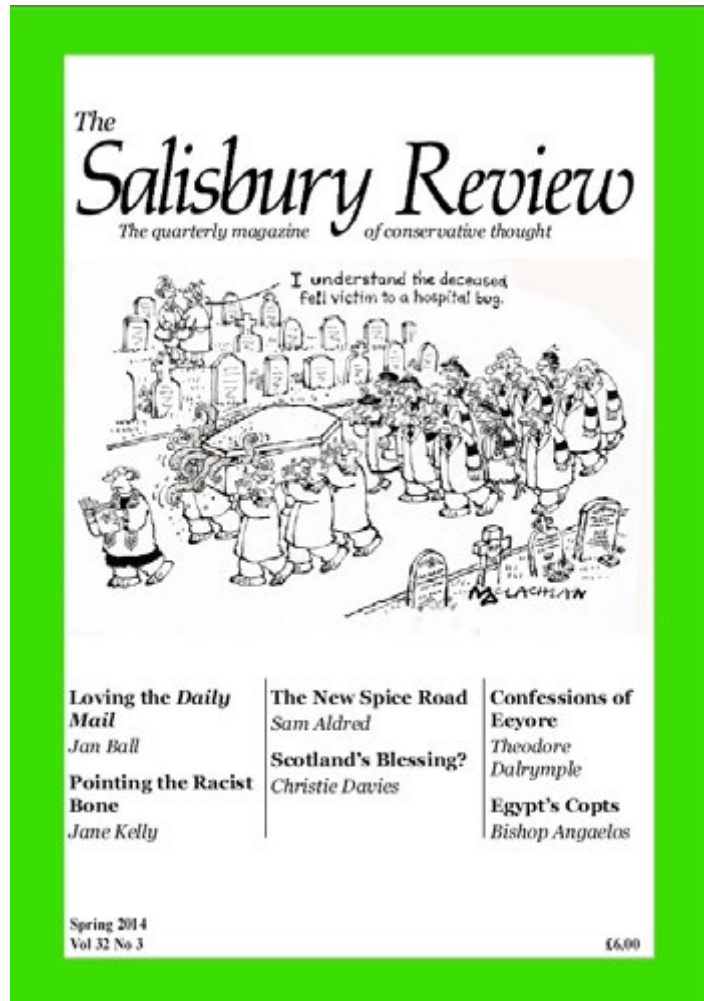
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Robert Gascoyne-Cecil,
the third Marquis of Salisbury,
caricatured by “Spy” for
Vanity Fair, 20 December 1900.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The 9th Annual Vanenburg Meeting



The **2014 Vanenburg Meeting** will be held Thursday to Sunday, **10-13 July**, at Jablonna Palace (*Pałac w Jabłonnie*) in historic Warsaw, Poland. The theme to be discussed this year is:

“Equality: Theories & Realities”.

An outstanding group of speakers will consider different theories of equality, including the nature and origin of the concept, and discuss the policies used to foster equality, and the impact that these may have on European culture and society.

In addition, various country reports will be given on the state of conservatism in Europe and political prospects for conservatives in the future.

The conference registration fees for full attendance are €160 for participants without a regular income and €250 for those with regular income. Fees for partial attendance vary. Also, regional differences in income will be taken into account. The conference fee includes lodging and all meals.

Vanenburg Society members who have paid their annual dues will receive a reduction from their registration fee. (Bank transfer and PayPal information is provided on the bottom of page 2.) If you wish to provide additional funds to help offset the costs for a student, someone without regular income, or a person from a specific country or institution, please contact the Secretary of the Vanenburg Society at: info@europeanrenewal.com

Edmund Burke Portrait

Now available, a limited number of framed copies of the rare, late 18th century wax portrait of Edmund Burke by Thomas R. Poole in the British National Portrait Gallery Collection, London (NPG No. 1607).

Reproduced by former specialist for Christie’s Fine Art Auctioneers, Michael Midgley, these portraits are of waxed plaster mounted on reverse black-painted glass in a white, grained wooden frame, 13.5 x 11.5 cm.

They are available at €105 each, plus postage and handling. For further details, please contact Mr. Midgley at: michaelmidgley@hotmail.co.uk

“This portrait of Edmund Burke is a fine tribute to a founding father of Conservative philosophy”.
(Zac Goldsmith MP, House of Commons, London)



“... 250 years later it is Burke who offers the deepest critique of politics today, and the greatest hope for its future”. (Jesse Norman, “*Edmund Burke — the great conservative who foresaw the discontents of our era*”, The Telegraph, 9 May 2013)