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August issue	19th July
September issue	23rd August
October issue	20th September
November issue	18th October
December issue	15th November
Jan/Feb double issue	13th December

Resolution

Editorial

Tom Clark

Right going wrong

Britain is gripped by the theatre of the absurd. The dialogue is rife with *Alice in Wonderland* arguments about the meaning of "meaningful," and whether or not to back up the "backstop date." The colourful chancers controlling the plot threaten to walk if they don't prevail on such arcane distinctions, and warn of a "meltdown." Meanwhile, pinstriped oddballs in the wings mutter darkly that they could any day bring it all crashing down by "weaponising" letters they claim to have tucked away in a drawer.

It is, in its way, compelling drama. Bizarrely, it's also important. For underneath all the frivolity of the Brexit farce, what's at stake is a nation's prosperity, indeed its place in the world. But until you escape the parliamentary ping pong and breathless claims of reassurances being ratted on, there's no hope of making sense of how the Conservatives got into this mess, or how they might get out.

So this month, we contextualise the Tory crisis by looking at the bigger picture and taking the longer view. Andrew Gamble (p26) sees Brexit as one manifestation of a nationalist-populist global insurgency against the moderate right. Donald Trump is the unmissable embodiment of that. Less noticed, but no less important, is the waning of Europe's centre-right. It is very recent: long after the financial crash, the likes of David Cameron and Angela Merkel could thrive. Only in the last year or so have the French Gaullists been walloped out of contention and Merkel's mighty CDU begun to slide. And it's not the old left that's cashing in: Italy's new government is a mix of "kick it all over" populists and "shut the ports" chauvinists.

An anaemic recovery has cost the mainstream right its trump card: a reputation for hard-headed competence. Exclusive new polling (p24 and p30) confirms Britain's Conservatives are now acutely vulnerable on this front, and also finds that they are seen as on the side of bankers and billionaires, rather than that of the farmers, small firms and thrifty pensioners on whom they traditionally relied. All this suggests a frailty to populist challenge, but in reviewing their remarkably successful history (p20) I'm struck by how many scrapes they have survived before by moving with the times. The difference with Brexit is that, if they go with a nationalist line, they risk falling out with the core business interest, something which really could sink them. They need to compromise, and it is going to be painful.

But there will, as Tory MP Lee Rowley points out (p32), come a time when Brexit is no longer the only issue. So we explore a few ideas which might just give the old bulwarks of the liberal order a future.

Tom Clark

@prospect_clark

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Head to **prospectmagazine.co.uk** for up-to-date analysis of Brexit developments, including Sionaidh Douglas-Scott on why parliament must make its voice heard and Peter Kellner on why a second referendum would swing to "Remain." Plus: Bernard Jenkin on George Osborne's "despicable" behaviour at the helm of the *Evening Standard*.

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"My own voice is best summed up when I was in the annual Gilbert & Sullivan at the Dragon School. Bruno, the producer, put his ear to my mouth as I trilled and said one word: 'Don't.'"

Listen to the *Prospect* podcast

Hear the voices behind the essays and big ideas in this issue of *Prospect*, with our free podcast, *Headspace*.

In our latest episode, Andrew Gamble discusses the decline of centre-right politics across Europe. Tom Clark asks whether the Brexit debacle is a threat to the survival of the Tory Party, and Hephzibah Anderson wonders whether the emptying British high street is a sign of our national decline.

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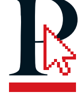

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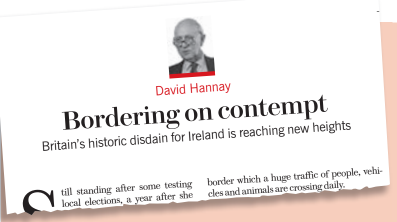

David Hannay

Bordering on contempt

Britain's historic disdain for Ireland is reaching new heights

Still standing after some testing local elections, a year after she

border which a huge traffic of people, vehicles and animals are crossing daily.

The Northern Irish question

David Hannay ("Bordering on contempt," June) brought up the elephant in the room. It never seems to be mentioned that Northern Ireland's electorate voted with a sizeable majority to remain in the European Union. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), an oxymoron if there ever was one, has swept its voters' intentions under the carpet. But Theresa May, following her opportunist, landslide-seeking mandate that didn't happen, relies on just 10 DUP MPs to prop up her government through a crucial time in our history.

I agree with Hannay that the government's approach to Brexit and Ireland has "insoluble internal contradictions." I hope he is right that "some of that pragmatism for which pre-Brexit Britain used to be known" may somehow emerge.

Jim Bostwick, Brighouse, West Yorkshire

The battle of Brexit

David Hannay is remarkably restrained in his analysis of the government's plans to create a border-that-is-not-a-border in Ireland. He makes it sound as if the only way to deal with people who don't believe they have to stick to the rules of logic or reality is to express frustration and wait for them to fail.

Which raises the question: if Remain has all the good arguments and Leave has none, why is the latter dictating policy? To put it another way, how could a battle of ideas that was impossible to lose have been lost?

The answer must be that the wrong arguments are being deployed, and possibly by the wrong people. In opposition to Brexit, all we ever hear are high-level impersonal "macro" warnings of doom that fail to make emotional contact with swing voters. It is as if the leaders of Remain—safe in their sinecures and job titles—can think of nothing else to do except reassure each other that things will turn out as bad as they expect.

In hindsight, it's no wonder that Remain lost the referendum; but why does it continue to lose the argument today, despite all the absurdities we hear from the ideologues who have managed to get themselves appointed to the upper tiers of the Conservative Party?

If we are serious about reducing the damage from Brexit, we have to find some better arguments and allow fresh voices to air them. We still have time to have the debate that we didn't have in 2016. Perhaps *Prospect* would like to lead it and invite people outside the political, economic and media systems to participate.

Nicholas Inman

Vegan self-sufficiency

Jacqueline Birnie (Letters, May) issues a challenge: "give me a vegan who is able to eat in a way that does not promote industrial farming of plants or whose food comes from harvests produced without massive inputs of chemical fertilizers and pesticides." Step forward: me. The majority of my food comes from a locally-based organic vegetable and fruit box scheme, combined with what I grow in my garden and at my allotments.

Birnie is right that a vegan diet that is complicit with industrial agriculture is ecologically illiterate. But she is plain wrong to think that all vegans live and eat that way. It is increasingly easy for anyone in this country, vegan or otherwise, to live outside the orbit of agribusiness.

Dr Rupert Read, UEA

Shakespeare snobbery?

Jonathan Healey ("Who wrote Shakespeare?" June) starts and ends with the old canard that only snobs have reasonable doubt that William of Stratford wrote the plays and poems attributed to him.

The idea of William Shakespeare being a nom de plume dates back to the 16th century. The satirists John Marston and Joseph Hall soon spotted the name as a probable pseudonym. When Stratford-based "bardolatry" got serious in the 19th century, Mark Twain and Walt Whitman were among many who smelt a rat, and the late 20th century saw the mute trial that led to several Supreme Court judges and numerous lawyers, doctors, historians and academics throughout the world signing the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt referred to in your article.

The aristocratic author responsible for the poems and plays may himself have been a snob in modern liberal-left terms, but that is simply not the basis for our "reasonable doubt" being declared.

Amanda Hinds, Honorary Secretary of the de Vere Society

It's the planet, stupid

Astonishingly, the ten big brains chosen to comment on the most pressing lessons economics has to learn ("Rip it up and start again," May) failed to spot the most urgent issue of all. We live on a planet of finite resources. Current obsessions with growth, free trade and GDP have led us to a state of emergency.

Scientists think that we have perhaps two years left to avoid a 1.5 degree rise in temperature. Current emissions projections suggest a catastrophic risk to human health due to increases in prevalence of many infectious diseases, expansion of the range and transmission season of many vector borne diseases, health impacts of heat stress, impact on crop yields and the direct and indirect effects on health of extreme weather events.

We're losing species at 1,000 to 10,000 times the background rate. Our oceans may contain more plastic than fish by mid century and we could see an ice-free Arctic in the summer within ten years.

Tackling climate change presents an unprecedented opportunity for both health and addressing social inequality and poverty. Why then does moving towards an economic model that can exist within planetary boundaries not figure as one of the most important and urgent lessons to learn?

Dr Hayley Pinto

In fact

Out of all the countries that have appeared in at least five finals of the Eurovision Song Contest since 2000, the UK has the lowest average score (40.1 points)
Manchester Evening News, 11th May 2018

About 25,000 individuals in the US identify as Scientologists.
New York Times, 30th May 2018

After a cyclone damaged plantations on Madagascar, the price of vanilla hit a record $600 per kilogram, making it more expensive than silver ($538).
BBC News, 1st June 2018

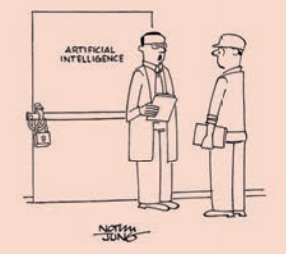
England is the only country in the 2018 World Cup whose team all play in domestic leagues.
Mirror, 4th June 2018

With a market capitalisation of $152.8bn, Netflix has overtaken Disney to become the world's most valuable media company.
Bloomberg, 1st June 2018

The Queen owns all porpoises, whales, sturgeon and dolphins that pass within three miles of Britain's shores.
New Yorker, 21st May 2018

For the first time in the history of chess, the best Chinese player in the world (Ding Liren, fourth) ranks ahead of the best Russian.
Chessbase, 26th May 2018

William Cubitt invented the treadmill in 1818 for use in prisons; inmates ground corn or pumped water on them, or were simply punished by having to use one.
Quartzy, 12th May 2018



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Andrew Adonis and Will Hutton

The Farage coup

The true leader of today's Tory Party has never even won a parliamentary seat

It was "common sense" for Britain to stay in Europe, Margaret Thatcher said, in the 1975 referendum campaign. "It seems to me," she said, "to display an amazing lack of self-confidence in Britain… to think that, when no other nation in the Community has lost its national character, Britain in some way will."

How ironic that she would eventually be one of the two politicians who, in the face of a failure of nerve by pro-Europeans, would put Britain on the path to Brexit. But at this stage she was "economic right," not "nationalist right"; hence she threw herself behind creating the single market.

She turned in 1988. The catalyst was Jacques Delors, the European Commission President who was pioneering a "social Europe," with new employment rights. Thatcher was OK with the EU while she thought it was about "markets," but when Delors came to Bournemouth to address the TUC, she was appalled. She promptly rewrote the speech she was due to give to the College of Europe in Bruges 12 days later, adding an attack on a putative superstate. In 1990, she was forced from office, partly owing to her bristling opposition to Brussels, but her ghost would haunt the party.

Enter our second Brexit-maker: Nigel Farage. He grew up in awe of Thatcher and joined the Tories in 1978 after her mentor, Keith Joseph, spoke at his south London public school. A brash, bloody-minded semi-rebel and wind-up merchant, Thatcherism became his philosophy. He got into the Bruges group and then, through that, Ukip.

In 1994, aged 30, he stood in the Eastleigh by-election and polled only 952 votes on the same day as European elections in which Ukip won just 1 per cent. It vied for attention with billionaire financier James Goldsmith and his Referendum Party, whose sole objective was an in/out vote. Goldsmith had everything Ukip lacked: money, connections and name recognition. But then Farage had two strokes of luck.

The first was that, two months after Tony Blair's 1997 landslide, Goldsmith died and his party disintegrated. The second was Blair introducing PR for the Euro-elections. Ukip could now secure seats, status and salaries in Brussels in a way they couldn't at Westminster. Farage immediately got elected and has been in the European parliament ever since.

Purple reign: he's still in charge

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In 2004, the second stroke of luck came. When the EU expanded east, Blair—alone among the main European leaders—waived the seven-year controls on migrants from Poland and the other joiners. They came in huge numbers and Ukip milked the resentment.

It's often scathingly remarked that Farage never won a Westminster seat. But losing parliamentary elections—seven in all—has made him constantly available to fight those who have seats to defend. He was ubiquitous, and while on becoming Tory leader David Cameron would initially make jibes about Ukip—"a bunch of fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists"—he was soon placating the Faragistes, promising a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty and pledging to repatriate powers on everything from social policy to fisheries. Then came Cameron's 2010 pledge to cut net immigration to "tens of thousands," and then the Brexit-lite bill to require referendums on all EU treaty changes. Cameron's Liberal Democrat coalition partners so feared a Ukip surge in their west country heartlands that they tried to sound tough on "Brussels" too.

The backdrop to all this kow-towing to Ukip was a eurozone crisis which would soon overlap with a refugee crisis. The EU was caricatured as an economic corpse. Germany was accused of imposing impossible terms on Greece and EU-wide austerity. Cameron chose to indulge the critics, and used the ongoing eurozone crisis to try and force concessions from other EU leaders. All he achieved was to infuriate Angela Merkel, who saw this as student union politics.

Cameron's 2013 concession of a Brexit referendum was thus the logical conclusion of the Brexit-lite drift of his policy. But far from being appeased, Farage moved in for the kill. In the June 2014 euro elections, Ukip got its best-ever result and, for the first time in any national election, the Tories came third. Two Conservative MPs soon defected to Ukip and held their seats in by-elections.

Downing Street panicked and Cameron tacked right, making a Brexit referendum a red line in any future coalition, and yet in 2015—with the backing of big donors, including Arron Banks—Ukip surged to 13 per cent, by far its best general election score. Cameron nonetheless squeaked home with a small majority and set out to secure a "new deal" with the EU. The trouble was that Britain enjoyed most plausible opt-outs and his party was created impossible benchmarks for success. It was growing daily more Faragist. Sensing time was his enemy, Cameron called the referendum within 10 months of winning the election. From day one, he was on the back foot: the argument about a reformed EU was not so much lost as never made.

Immigration soured opinion, and the "Remain" campaign was a disaster. When polling day came, a record 33,577,342 people voted. Shortly after dawn on 24th June, Cameron announced he respected "the instruction of the British people," and also quit.

As he resigned, Farage was having breakfast with Freddie Barclay, owner of the Ritz and the *Telegraph*. On 13th July, Theresa May succeeded Cameron as PM. But it was Farage who had become leader of the Conservative Party; he continues to call the shots.

Andrew Adonis and Will Hutton are co-authors of "Saving Britain: How We Must Change to Prosper in Europe"

Hephzibah Anderson

Closing down

The life lessons we'll lose when the high streets fall

When the pound shops are in trouble you know it's bad. The British high street has been tottering for the best part of a decade, but this year has brought gloomier news than we've heard since 2012. Toys R Us is toast. House of Fraser, New Look and Moss Bros are in varying states of peril. M&S is poised to close 100 stores and, yes, Poundworld has gone into administration.

Business rates, out-of-town shopping, Brexit—they may be contributing factors but it's fundamentally e-commerce that has struck the death knell for brick-and-mortar vendors. As Amazon gobbles their business models, the deafening clunk of shutter after shop shutter is sounding out across the land. It's left the average high street raggedy and gap-toothed, a place to hurry tactfully past rather than tarry in.

Retail remains our largest private employer, but when closed signs are flipped over permanently, livelihoods aren't all that are lost. The high street—whether that's a little strip of indies, or a precinct chockful of chains—has always sold more than stuff. It's a truism that when shops close, they take with them the hearts of their communities. High streets are sources of serendipity—you never know who you'll run into—and the kind of anarchic randomness epitomised by Poundworld's inventory. They're places to browse unfettered by algorithms.

Shops are woven into the very fabric of lives. As children, they taught us about arithmetic, civility and independence. We played with toy cash registers, counted out our pocket money and said our "pleases" and "thank yous" in toy shops. The high street of the nearest market town to where I grew up remains vivid for me. I can still conjure up the scent of the butchers on days when men in white hats and wellies would wrestle carcasses in through its narrow doorway. The newsagents on the corner was low-ceilinged and thickly carpeted and the sweetshop, with its shining ranks of chocolate bars and jar-lined walls, had a barbers out back. Because the area had begun to attract weekenders, there was also a health food shop with a bakery. At school, "down the shops" was the coveted destination of those old enough to be let out of the gates during the lunch hour, and come sixth form, it was where we went to ask for part-time jobs.

Even chain stores are intimately woven into our shared memories. Mothercare, now wobbling, will always mean school sandals for me. The Body Shop, somehow still going, is forever the place where I bought a scarlet lipstick after my first boyfriend dumped me to focus on his A Level history revision (yes, I was thrown over for Bismarck). Laura Ashley, whose continued existence seems vaguely incredible, was where I found my first little black dress in a sale bin. When these stores collapse they take our stories with them.

Of course, the stores we remember were themselves squatting in graves of older shops. Just look up, and above the signage for Debenhams (another struggler) or Next (2017 was its worst year in 25) you can see architectural traces of another, altogether more gracious shopping era, when every county town had its own local version of Fortnum's, filled with palms and light and sweeping staircases.

So perhaps it's not so much what's vanishing as the absence of a replacement, the failure to fill the proliferating empty spaces, that's so depressing. They remind us of the joyless, solitary experience we've all bought into, shopping alone at home, bathed in the glow of our screens. As we've surrendered the heart of our physical communities for convenience, we've also given away the frivolity of shopping for clothes with a group of girlfriends, and the chance to joke with a stranger at the check-out.

Not that e-commerce is devoid of the human dimension. After the midnight impulse click, a package in saggy grey plastic has to be abandoned on your doorstep, some hours after their six-hour delivery slot, via a courier who thrusts a stylus at you. The fact that it's almost impossible to form a legible letter, let alone words, with those things seems somehow apt—I can't imagine online shopping giving my daughter the kinds of intensely personal memories that the high street has gifted me with.

Hephzibah Anderson is a journalist and author

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George Magnus

China hasn't won yet

The rising power is squaring up to the west. But it could still be undone by its top-down model

Away from the daily news about America's spats with China over trade and technology, we know one thing at least: the world's two biggest economies are locking horns for the foreseeable future and, like it or not, the rest of us will be drawn in. We are witnessing a sharp divergence in the ways of the world. On one side is China's model of authoritarian state capitalism in a Leninist structure with the Communist Party at its heart. On the other, a western model still not fully recovered from the financial crisis, but one based on liberty, individual freedom, and the rule of law.

In last month's *Prospect*, Kerry Brown assessed Australia's challenging relationship with China and described a country caught between Beijing's interference and Donald Trump's weakening commitment to Canberra. Brown's conclusion—Britain should set the terms for its engagement with China, unless it wants Beijing to do so unilaterally. Isabel Hilton's article, also last month, considered the ways in which "Xi Jinping Thought" has permeated Chinese media, society, business and commerce. As the Party tries to persuade other countries to follow its political and cultural model, often by clandestine methods, she wonders whether we have even started to think of the consequences should it succeed.

Xi's China has indeed performed a remarkable shift. A radical change in government structure was unveiled at the 19th Party Congress last October and approved by the National People's Congress in March. The changes aim to make Xi's command more disciplined and effective as he, at the head of the Communist Party, pursues the struggle to realise the "Chinese Dream," or the nation's "great rejuvenation." But while there is no doubt that China is surging onwards, it is heading towards a politically uncertain end.

In its foreign policy, China's behaviour is consistent with that of a regional hegemon, and an aspirant global power. Its signature policy is Xi's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Dressed up as a Eurasian development project, and sometimes likened, incorrectly, to the US Marshall Plan after the Second

Last issue: the China question

World War, the BRI is much more a China-centric strategy designed to confer economic and geopolitical benefits.

The BRI is intended to cement China's position as the world's biggest export hub, while plugging it into the middle eastern and Eurasian oil and commodities it so needs. It will also edge China towards maritime and military control of the East China Sea, which includes Taiwan, and also the South China Sea, which carries about a third of global sea-borne trade. The BRI will also encircle India via port and naval facilities from Southeast Asia via Bangladesh and Pakistan to the Horn of Africa.

The BRI will bring infrastructure to poor regions and capital-hungry nations. Yet it will also bring large debts to countries with limited ability to repay. According to one recent study, the peculiarities of Chinese rather than multilateral agency financing threaten 23 countries with some form of financial distress, and eight with debt sustainability issues. Disputes over financing conditions and control of projects linked to the BRI have caused some countries, including Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Kenya and Tanzania to cancel or suspend projects.

Kishore Mahbubani opined in *Prospect* last month that the "meritocratic" Communist Party should be trusted as a bulwark against Chinese nationalism and to deliver global public goods.

Yet this sanitised version of China's place in the world is a far cry from the reality. At home, the strengthening of the Party's position within the governance structure and the establishment of Party representation in both state and private enterprises make for a very different business environment. Top-down, politically-set targets for key sectors in advanced manufacturing and technology could hinder China's ambitions to achieve global technological supremacy. And the claim that China's model of digital authoritarianism will prove more productive than the looser western model based around private initiative and disruptive change is contentious at best.

Yes, China has a huge market in which the authorities can experiment with data gathering and usage. It is true, too, that its society is much less sensitive about privacy, and there are no social or democratic mechanisms to argue over how capital and labour will be rewarded in the new technological age. Yet western tech know-how, values and methods have been adept at creating general purpose technologies (as opposed to scientific accomplishments). Who's to say they are now defunct? One thing is for sure: there's no precedent for a state-driven dictatorship to realise the economic and tech success to which China aspires. If it does, it will be a first.

One final thing to note about top-down economics. In the past 30 years, China's growth and productivity have surged on three occasions: the rural reforms of the 1980s; the privatisation and housing reform of the 1990s; and following WTO accession in the 2000s. On each occasion, the Party stepped back, pragmatically pushed market reforms as far as it felt able, and reaped remarkable benefits. And yet now, just when China needs the state to back off, the government tightens its grip.

George Magnus's new book, "Red Flags: Why Xi's China is in Jeopardy" (Yale) will be published in September

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Samira Shackle

Pakistan's Potemkin democracy

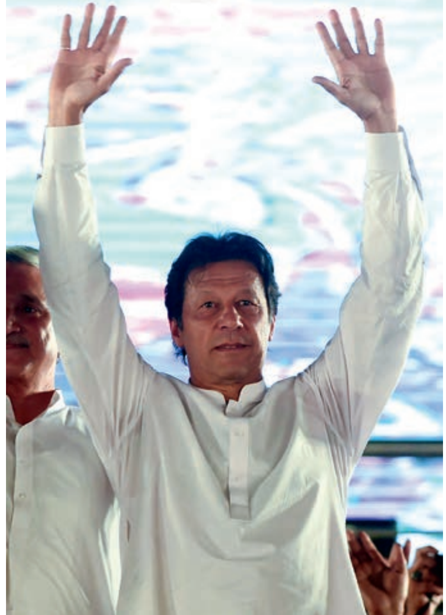
Don't be fooled by elections—the military is still in charge

Covering the general election in Pakistan in 2013 was an often disorienting experience. I spent the day alternating between speaking to people at polling stations and doing live interviews with international television channels. There was a marked disjunction: the anchors in London or New York wanted to know about the threat of terrorism that had cast a shadow over the campaign. But on the streets of the capital, all I saw was jubilation. Entire families were out, waving Pakistan flags and taking in the atmosphere. Young men tied bandanas of their party's colours round their heads and danced in the middle of dual carriageways, blocking traffic. Queues of women snaked out of the female sections of gender-segregated polling stations.

The reason for this carnival-like atmosphere was simple—this was a milestone. It was Pakistan's first ever democratic transition from one elected civilian government to another. This is a country that, since it was formed in 1947, has spent almost half its years under military dictatorship. Despite the terror threat that had made it hard for parties to hold rallies, and despite widespread corruption and weak state institutions, there was a outpouring of joy at exercising the democratic right of voting out one set of leaders and voting in another.

It is hard to imagine there will be a similar celebration when, in late July, Pakistan goes to the polls for what is theoretically its second democratic transition. While on paper, this streak of elections and continuous civilian rule might appear to demonstrate a transition to democracy, in practice the military establishment is cementing its control in all areas of public life.

Over the last few months, its campaign of intimidation and crackdown on dissent has intensified to a frightening degree. In June, a newspaper columnist and prominent critic of the military, Gul Bukhari, was abducted by armed men in the city of Lahore. She was temporarily detained and her driver was beaten. Another high-profile journalist, Taha Siddiqui, has had to flee to France. They are just two of the scores of journalists and bloggers who have been forcibly detained over the last year. Many more have been censored or threatened. The popular television station Geo News was taken off air, only coming back on after its bosses agreed to toe the line. The country's most prestigious English language newspaper, *Dawn*, which has been defiant in the face of censorship, has had its distribution disrupted in major cities.



Yes we Khan

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The military's campaign of censorship centres on two things. The first is the former prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, who was elected to power in 2013. A vocal critic of the military, Sharif was ousted in July 2017 over a corruption scandal. Rather than following the usual pattern of ousted Pakistani leaders and retreating to exile, Sharif has behaved like an insurgent candidate, holding rallies and arguing that his ousting was engineered by the military and judiciary. There have been other remarkable examples of censorship, including the sound being switched off from a speech by Sharif broadcast live on television in April.

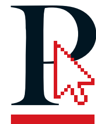
The second target of the clampdown is a grassroots movement by Pakistan's ethnic Pashtun population, which has suffered immensely from the army's "war-on-terror" tactics. Pashtuns, who hail from the north-west of Pakistan close to the Afghanistan border, have been treated as a suspect population for many years. The movement, led by young people, has gathered tens of thousands to countrywide rallies to demand civil rights and call for answers about mass arrests and disappearances. They are operating under an almost complete mainstream media blackout.

Against this backdrop, where the mere expression of dissent exposes individuals and groups to extraordinary pressure and personal risk, it is difficult to celebrate the elections as a democratic transition. The military clearly has the upper hand over the democratically-elected civilian government; any favourable mention of the current party of government—Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz—is effectively off limits.

When Sharif was ousted, he was replaced as prime minister by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, but in practice Sharif has remained the de facto head of the PML-N and is the current favourite to win the 2018 election. Behind them in the polls is former cricketer Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf party. Khan, a populist and nationalist, recently said "I will carry the army with me."

Pakistan's democracy has always been fledgling. During the 2013 election, the heightened threat from terror groups restricted free speech on certain subjects, and for those political parties that advocated a more secular, liberal approach. But another main talking point at the time was the increased power of the media—which had changed from being entirely controlled pre-2001, to becoming a strong fourth estate that could hold power to account. Some speculated that the effectiveness of the media had prevented a full military takeover. It is telling that five years later, the military is taking such obvious steps to control that newly potent space. As the military tightens its grip and seeks to silence those who question its authority, the public space for dissent is shrinking all the time.

Samira Shackle is a freelance journalist



A taste of the latest from *Prospect* online: David Omand

Agents of our own destruction

A former spy-chief says social media emboldens the far Right

Twitter and Facebook have a darker side. I have seen them encourage the growth of radical voices, most worryingly on the far right, where alt-right and other extremist tendencies have in recent years gained ground. These forces are becoming so powerful that they now threaten the foundations of western democracy.

The internet's pioneers thought the online world would lead to a mass engagement with global challenges such as conflict, the environment and poverty. But social media use is creating a contrary trend, that taps into the deep roots of our tribal instincts. The like-minded gather together. And when this happens, misfortunes tend to be blamed on the "other." The result is an increasing fragmentation of politics into "us versus them" group.

Anonymity lends the online world an especially nasty flavour. It encourages a crudeness that would not be tolerated face to face. A sense of online disinhibition feeds attacks on those who espouse contrary views and the effect can be very powerful.

Access to diverse opinions are an essential part of how voters make up their minds. Increasingly, however, the design of social media encourages users to spend more time in a bubble of advertising and political messaging. When social media spreads information that's intentionally misleading or false, it undermines the choices that underpin any open society. In the long-run, that flight from rationality in political debate further weakens confidence in public bodies, expertise and leadership which makes us ever-more vulnerable to manipulation.

These are the characteristics that have left us vulnerable to demagogues and extremists and which bring us to the most worrying point of all: social media enhances the subversive agendas of states like Russia. It is striking that the tactics used to interfere in the US election aimed to polarise US politics, already a feature of the Trump campaign. Russian attempts to interfere in the French election were intended to promote Marine Le Pen's chances, in the hope that her hard-right agenda—especially on immigration—would destabilise politics in France.

Islamic State exploited social media. Different kinds of extremism can feed off one another online. Violent IS propaganda has stoked its counterpart on the extreme right. The interaction of the two has further polarised opinion over immigration, housing and jobs, and put sections of the community at each other's throats.

For liberal democracies to survive and thrive in the digital age, we have to understand the vulnerability of the modern political process to covert manipulation of public opinion. It can come from without or within the nation. If we fail to see it, we risk becoming agents of our own destruction.

David Omand is the former head of GCHQ. His lates book is "Principled Spying" (Georgetown University Press)

Stephen Collins

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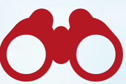

The view from Amman: Rana Sweis

Seventh time lucky

Protests in Jordan have led to a new prime minister—but will reform remain elusive?

One June evening in Jordan's capital, Amman, rows of policemen stood in a perfectly straight line next to security forces carrying batons. They blocked cars from a main road and the area known as the Fourth Circle, where the prime ministry rests on a small hill. Loud clapping, chants and cheers rang out. "Death rather than humiliation," the protestors repeated rhythmically.

After days of widespread protests, the largest since the ill-fated Arab Spring, King Abdullah decided enough was enough and sacked his prime minister. It's not the first time he's pulled this move—the new man, Omar Razzaz, is the seventh prime minister since 2011—and, as on previous occasions, it appears to have worked for him. In a scathing rebuke, the king even accused most of his ministers as being asleep. The protests—which were sparked by the introduction of a controversial tax bill and fuelled by long-term issues such as youth unemployment, lack of genuine political participation and a protracted refugee crisis—are over. Jordan's richer allies in the region, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, pledged $2.5bn in aid to help the country contain domestic anger over the austerity measures and finance development projects.

Yet this time it could be different. The street protests were spontaneous, widespread and reflected public resentment over the economy. The appointment of Razzaz, seen as a principled reformer without political baggage, is a sign that the long-promised process of reform may finally move into first gear. The renewed Gulf largesse comes with strings attached that do not give Jordan room to defer reform again.

The underlying conditions behind the desire for change persist, whether grounded in economic frustration, political dislocation or social exclusion. Joblessness among the youth feels like a social plague. One striking example is Russifeh, a town only a few kilometers from Amman, home to a large Palestinian refugee population, where a series of failed public policies have led to a palpable sense of neglect and hopelessness. Once the town met a positive stereotype of Arab rural life, filled with orchards and fields, cows and apricots, pomegranates and peach trees. Today, it is synonymous with school drop-outs, drug use and jihadis. It is overcrowded, lacking open spaces, parks or basic services.

Since 2011, public debates have been squeezed or even banned in Jordan. Suspensions and detentions of student activists have continued. Fear and self-censorship returned. This is no longer an approach that Jordan can afford. The lack of confidence and trust between the people and the government cannot be overcome except through a model of political reform that offers to bridge the gap between an angry public and a distant, ineffective system of government. The message of June's protests is that something has to give.

The choice facing the king is whether or not to allow changes that will empower Razzaz's government to implement an agenda that conflicts with the traditional vested interests of the Jordanian state. Many will remember that the king's reaction to the Arab Spring protests were similarly positive in terms of promising change—but the outcome was widely regarded as disappointing.

The protestors last week were keen to show they didn't belong to any political party but rather represented the poor and the middle class. The protestors went out of their way to show the police and army there that they were standing up for them as well.

In truth, Jordan's government became complacent, while society watched in horror at events in Syria, Egypt and Iraq. Those in charge believed that external chaos would dampen down domestic public resentment at continued economic squeeze. But there has been an awakening. At the protests, a young woman held up a sign that read: "Please don't use fear and say we don't want Jordan to be like Syria. We want our country to be like Singapore."

Rana F Sweis is a Jordanian journalist and the author of "Voices of Jordan" (Hurst)

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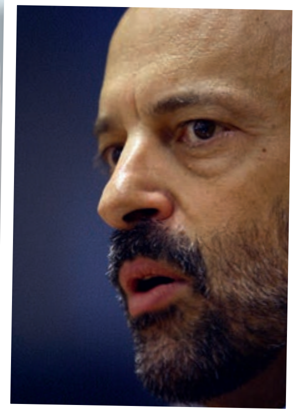

The King and I: King Abdullah lays down the law; Omar Razzaz, the current Jordanian PM; protests in Jordan after the previous PM resigned

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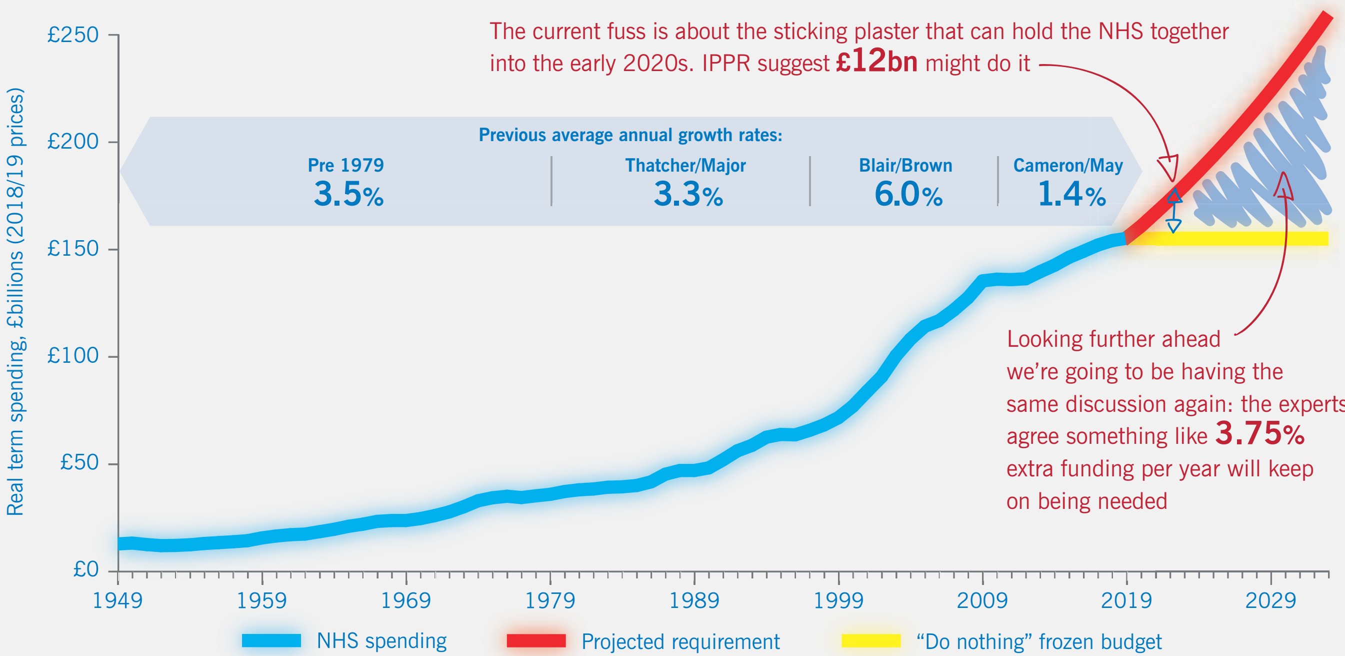
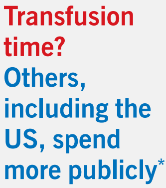
We're all going to pay for the NHS's 70th birthday bailout. Before long, it will need another

The rising cost of care
NHS budgets have been rising slower than ever before



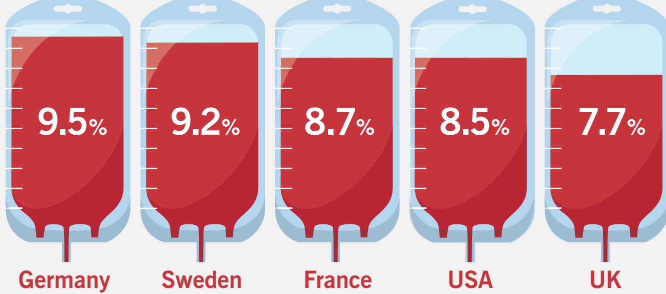
The NHS was a robust 60 year old, but it is decidedly frail as it notches up three score years and ten. It has endured the longest squeeze in its history. Budgets have crept up, but not fast enough to keep pace with the big pressures like ageing, and at only a fraction of the rate it has previously required. After the largesse of New Labour, the service initially coped on rations, but this is no longer so: waits are up, operations cancelled and winter is becoming an annual crisis.

Crunching the numbers in different ways, two thinktanks—the IPPR and the IFS—both agree that to keep the show on the road, annual budget growth of something like 3.75 per cent will be needed. This tots up to roughly £12bn by the early 2020s, the precise sum depending on whether social care gets some of the cash. Whitehall is moving towards such a "birthday present," and the IPPR proposes National Insurance hikes to foot the bill. But as the top chart shows, this bailout won't last long; another on the same scale will be needed a few years on. But our malady isn't unique. Other governments spend more, even those in places like the US where there is also a vast private sector.

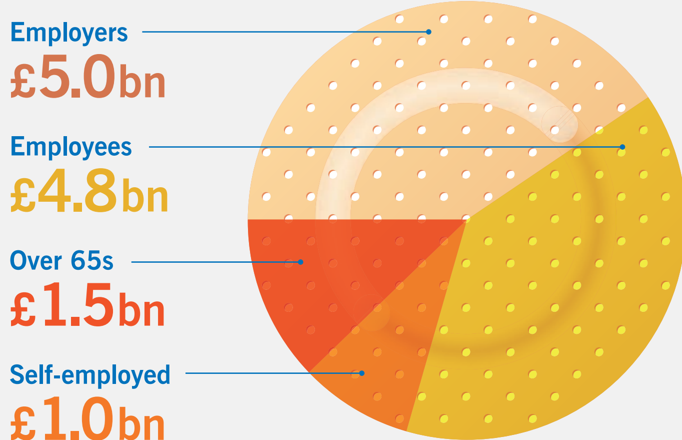


Transfusion time?
Others, including the US, spend more publicly*

*Proportion of GDP spent on "Government/ Compulsory schemes," OECD numbers for 2016"



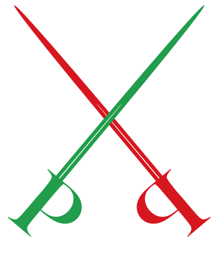
A pricey plaster
IPPR's plan for raising the bailout cash



SOURCES: INSTITUTE FOR FISCAL STUDIES, INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH, OECD

The Duel

Has test cricket had its day?



Zafar Ansari
YES

Mike Selvey
NO

YES Test cricket is a bit like democracy. Both are apparently always about to collapse, ready to be replaced by inferior alternatives. Where democracy is threatened by the spectre of populism, for test cricket the current fear is T20.

These worries are not new. Following defeat to Australia in 1882, English cricket was infamously pronounced dead, with its body "cremated" and its ashes memorialised. And ever since then, anxieties about the longevity of test cricket have existed.

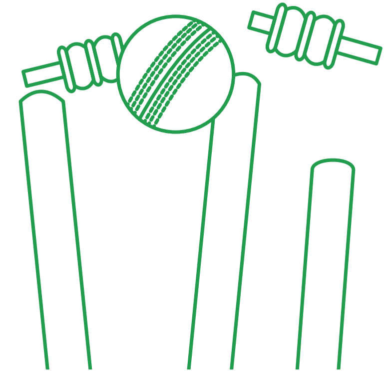
Yet beneath this there has remained a fundamental confidence that test cricket will adapt and endure. After all, its proponents argue, it always has, and the expansion of the women's game and inclusion of new countries are the most recent proof.

I think, however, that the belief that test cricket will survive because it is "test cricket" is mistaken.

Let's consider the audience, without whom test cricket cannot persist. The already narrow group of people who watch test cricket in this country is being hollowed out further by high ticket prices and the cost of television packages, as well as huge competition from other less traditional sports. Likewise, internationally, the marked decline in crowds for test matches seems to speak to their inability to capture people's imaginations compared with the game's shorter formats.

To write these pressures off as "external forces" is to deny the way they reflect test cricket's structural weaknesses in the contemporary world. These stem from the mismatch between a slow, five-day game and an era when most people feel their free time is increasingly limited.

It is this mismatch that must be overcome if the case for test cricket's long-term survival is to be made successfully. A restatement of its innate value and historic durability won't do.



NO In his poem "The One-Way Critic," the cricket writer RC "Crusoe" Robertson-Glasgow, himself a Somerset captain of the 1920s, has a crusty ancient at a match, reading the *Daily Moan*, and grumbling about the decline of the game. "The state of cricket goes from bad to worse;/ Where are the batsmen of my boyhood's prime?/ Where are the bowlers of the pristine years?/ Where are the fieldsmen of the former time?" The narrator can stand no more, gives him a mouthful and then turns back to "Larwood's bounding run/ And Woolley's rapier flashing in the sun."

Crusoe wrote this in the early years postwar but it may as well have been written today. The common public perception is always that test match cricket is not as good as it was. It has always been on its last legs. And yet here it still is, in this country anyway. (Perhaps the question is too much of a generalisation.) In some parts of the cricket world it is undeniably on life support. But to think that of test cricket wholesale is simplistic and wrong.

You argue that it is mistaken to think that test cricket will survive simply because of what it is, but that is precisely the reason that it is still here in an increasingly demanding society with a broadening range of alternatives. My own experience of playing tests in this country involves misty-eyed memories of great West Indians performing to packed vibrant grounds. But footage shows that the grounds were half empty. Today, test matches can sell out here on a regular basis. Cricket will not expand globally through test cricket; that is down to T20. But it can, and I believe will, attain a niche status. Because it is what it is.

YES It seems we agree that test cricket is, as you say, "on life support" in some parts of the world. Where

we perhaps disagree is what this means for test cricket more generally.

In my view, a big part of test cricket's identity derives from its history as a sport that connected a small but nevertheless diverse range of nations from across the globe. If test cricket is on a path to attaining niche status in one or two countries, this is a troubling forewarning rather than an indication of its resilience.

More practically, it is important to consider the consequences of this impending future. The narrowing of the format's geographical scope will affect not only who watches test cricket, but also how the game is played and who plays it.

Part of the beauty of test cricket has been the way that conditions and cultures have interacted to produce distinctive skills around the world. Look, for instance, at spin bowling in the subcontinent or the back-foot play of Australians. Without geographical diversity, the sport will change, and the knock-on effects on its longevity should not be underestimated. Likewise, if the best players in those parts of the world where test cricket is fading lose their incentive to play it, the thing that marks it out—its superior quality—may fade too.

Interestingly, in Crusoe's poem, the person grumbling about the decline of the game is a "crusty ancient," who fits the stereotype of the old nostalgic, harking back to a bygone era when things were better. A key difference is that those expressing concerns about test cricket's permanence today do not all conform to this type. The fact that we are seeing players in their prime, by their words and actions, question the format's long-term survival reveals that test cricket is facing a different sort of challenge. History may provide a context for this, without containing a blueprint for what comes next.

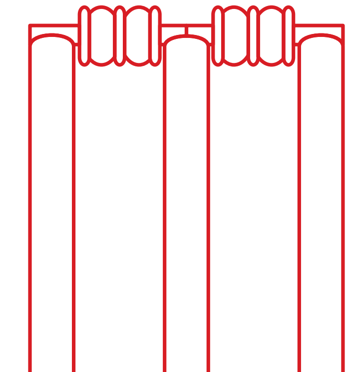
NO I refer to test cricket as becoming niche, but in truth, no matter how popular it once appeared, it was ever thus. Until Ireland and Afghanistan were added to the list recently, there have been only 10 test-playing nations, and three of those—Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh—did not get that status until 1981, 1992 and 2000 respectively. That is a dozen when the UN consists of 193 sovereign states. The game in this form is a colonial throwback: I have never watched test cricket in a country that does not drive on the left.

So although test cricket has been followed by vast numbers, particularly on the subcontinent, it has never expanded beyond those confines. Here is a game with deep cultural roots, and, as you point out, a great diversity in skills contingent on environment.

But the subject is still too much of a generalisation. Undoubtedly the rise of short-form cricket has affected the game, but one only has to look at the furore surrounding the England team when they lose badly—as they did at Lord's to Pakistan—to understand that there is an underlying passion. An economist might suggest that high ticket prices and sell-out crowds show that supply is being met by healthy demand.

The recent travails of the Australian team were seen as a national disaster in that country, while the world's highest earning cricketer, Virat Kohli, is determined to play test cricket in India. Test match attendances in Australia have been rising year on year. This does not suggest last legs.

YES I find it heartening that you are so positive about test cricket's future, despite the countervailing forces that have been discussed. To finish, though, there are a few lessons that I take from my own recent experiences.



The first is that current players—my recent teammates—loved playing T20. Though test cricket was generally acknowledged by them to be a thorough examination of a player's skill, underneath this platitude was a widely-held view that T20 is where the game is, and should be, going.

Secondly, my short stint as a test cricketer underpinned the concerns I've voiced about the game's constricting geography. It was clear from the sparse crowds for England's tour at the end of 2016 that Virat Kohli has not had a galvanising effect on test cricket in India.

Third, leaving the game has emphasised to me just how niche test cricket already is, even in this country. The vast majority of my new colleagues working in the charitable sector had no idea that England were even playing Pakistan in May, let alone that there was a furore surrounding its defeat. Equally, whereas a number of them are excited to go to see a T20 later in the summer, most do not know anything about "test" cricket. While, on its own, this is neither new nor conclusive, it highlights the precarious position of test cricket in the face of fresh challenges.

Any serious analysis of the impact of these threats to test cricket's life expectancy should not be done in a kneejerk fashion. It's right to treat with suspicion the next iteration of the longstanding "death of test cricket" thesis.

Nonetheless, there is a danger that the conviction generated by test cricket's past has created a quiet complacency about its future. T20, the internet and the empire were not "ever thus," and to assume test cricket will be is a mistake.

NO You have broadened the debate here into whether T20 is the future of the game. Without equivocation, that has been my stance for a good few years. Cricket will not expand globally through any other means than T20.

Furthermore, it has been my long-held belief that it is the women's game that will grow fastest, and it is through them, not their male counterparts, that the game will establish itself in the lucrative markets of the United States and China. In a decade, I would venture, there will be some very wealthy female cricketers.

The enthusiasm of your former colleagues for T20 is understandable. I too enjoyed all the short form games of my time. But there is an implication here that the longest form of the game and the shortest are mutually exclusive, and I don't hold that they are. Test cricket can survive and I take issue with the suggestion that players would prefer not to play it: it can form an integral part of a highly lucrative career. But I mention the impact of Virat Kohli only because of his very recent stance on the importance of test cricket to him. Jos Buttler, similarly one of the most marketable cricketers in the world, has reiterated his ambition to play test cricket.

The issue to me is not whether players want to play but whether it will be there to play at all. To this end, I come back to the niche argument. Think of test cricket in the same way as we do much of the arts. It needs subsidising, promoting, and the experience needs to be made better for the public (how that's done is for others to decide!)

Several centuries ago, the operas of Mozart were the popular entertainment of the day. They are scarcely mainstream now, niche even in modern society, but no less relevant for that: they remain important. That is how I see test cricket.

Zafar Ansari is a former England cricketer
Mike Selvey, formerly the Guardian's cricket correspondent, played for England and captained Glamorgan

Has test cricket had its day?
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Last month we asked *Prospect* readers **Do we undervalue the arts in favour of science?**
They answered: **Yes** 59% **No** 41%

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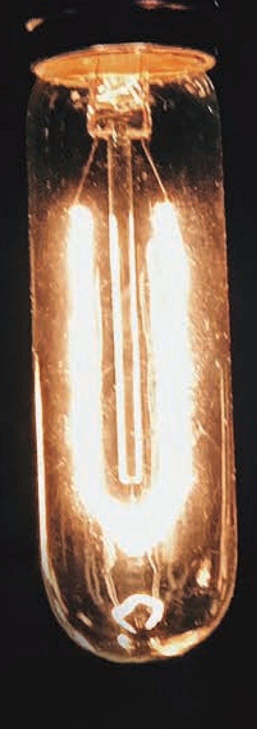

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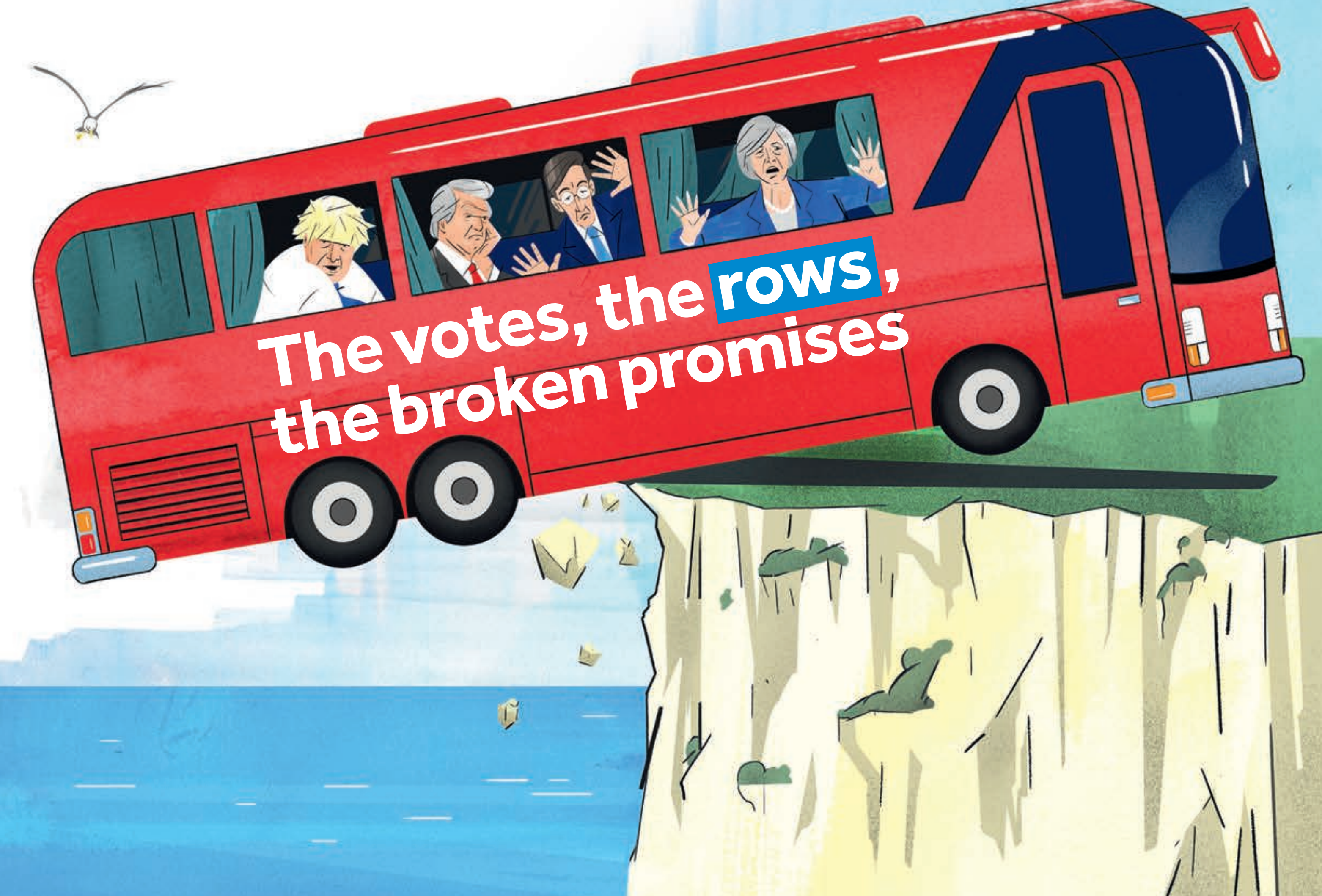
Features

Can the Tories survive Brexit?

Britain's "natural party of government" is tearing itself apart over Brexit. The Conservatives have often bounced back over their long history, but this time might be different. New polling for *Prospect* reveals how tainted the party already is in the eyes of the voters. And it's not the only centre-right party in crisis—across Europe, established political giants are struggling to respond to a wave of populist nationalism. Yet there are new ideas that could pave a way back, if the centre-right is brave enough to embrace them ▸



Will Brexit break the Conservatives?

They've come through war, the end of Empire and not a few spats about Europe. But just occasionally a special sort of row arises, one that truly sinks the Tories

TOM CLARK

The May cabinet is riven with division on the only real issue of the hour—how to leave the EU

What does it mean to be a Conservative? For Lord Salisbury, it was about standing firm against the "army of so-called reform." For Disraeli, in some moods at least, it was about healing the rift between England's two nations. And for Tony Hancock, it was an acceptable patriotic alternative to giving blood.

The lack of any agreed answer hasn't stopped the tribe that bears the Conservative name from being, in England at least, the natural party of government; it has been a source of great adaptability and advantage. But today, as Andrew Gamble sets out on p26, the whole European centre-right is under new pressure from resurgent nationalist populism to define itself much more sharply. And in the UK, with the clock ticking down towards Brexit, these dilemmas are particularly urgent. The Tories stand on the cusp of making decisions that will not only be fateful for the country's place in the world, but will also define what—and who—the Conservatives stand for today.

With her "backstops," "implementation phases" and panicked last-minute compromises, Theresa May has kicked cans down the road wherever possible precisely because she senses that any decision that gives the Tories more definition will be dangerously divisive. And she may well be right to fear the unforgivingly bright light that Brexit is casting on the party's ideas and priorities. For the doctrinal haze that sits at the heart of Conservatism has served it well.

The long list of values that have, at one time or another, been associated with Conservative thought—including freedom, authority, community, individualism, tub-thumping militarism and world-weary pragmatism—is varied to the point of self-contradiction in theory. No wonder that its intellectuals have pleaded that Conservatism is not "a doctrine, but a disposition" (Michael Oakeshott) or "not so much a philosophy, as an attitude" (Quintin Hogg). As for the practice, the application of all this is positively dizzying. Traditional community? It counted for little when Thatcher was consigning old industries and ways of life to the scrapheap. Militarism? The party lurched from Edwardian jingo to interwar appeasement—before it supplied Britain's greatest belligerent in 1940. Liberty? The party suspended *habeas corpus* in the 19th century, but then supplied the lawyers who drafted the European Convention on Human Rights in the 20th—only to regret this achievement by the 21st.

If politics was confined to debating societies, all this sliding about would spell a Conservative rout. Liberals, socialists and assorted other rationalists have often imagined that their day is coming because they judge that they're winning the ideological argument. Yet more often than not, the Conservatives have cleaned up, precisely because of their willingness to jettison inconvenient ideological baggage. Some may see Brexit as a profoundly un-Conservative thing to do—it tears up relationships and institutions rooted in 40 years of experience, and sacrifices established advantages for an unknowable future. When it comes to the fate of the party as opposed to the nation, however, this doesn't necessarily matter. Indeed, the Conservatives are today, if anything, narrowly ahead in the polls. If there is any centre-right party in Europe that you would expect, on the strength of its record, to find a way through the challenges of resurgent nationalism and Brexit, then it would be the Tories.

But whereas the Conservatives have often regrouped and survived crises that should have torn them asunder, on rare occasions, a schism has proved more fundamental, and a party that exists to wield power has ended up out of office for a very long time. As May looks ahead to more crunch votes and possible painful concessions on Brexit, the question I've

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been putting to the most thoughtful Tory politicians I know is whether or not Britain's departure from the European Union will provoke nothing more than another in the long line of Conservative reinventions, or whether it could prove to be one of those rare crises that really does sink the Conservatives.

History lessons

The past is always alive in a party of tradition: the ninth Duke of Wellington, an active Remainer in the Lords, has invoked the first Duke's tricky judgment calls in discussing how much the upper house can reasonably hope to hold out for as it seeks to soften Brexit. And, amid the argument about a "meaningful vote" on the deal with Europe, in which parliament is trying to claw back a measure of control from the executive, another Tory peer with even more venerable lineage said his ancestor had tried something similar while working with Cromwell, and ended up losing his head.

So what can we deduce from the history books about when the Conservatives have—or more rarely have not—been able to come through a crisis intact? The Conservatives have virtually always been able, in the end, to deal with disputes about abstract values, even seemingly-foundational ones. In the 19th century the Tories were, before anything else, the party of the Established Church. Wellington saw it as integral to the fabric of the nation, and was fiercely opposed to Catholic Emancipation. But when he realised there was no practicable alternative means to safeguard the Union with Ireland, the Iron Duke bent and let it through. Where is the parallel today? Think of the right-wing talk about diversity threatening the British way of life. That was probably always more of a Ukip narrative than a Conservative one, but it was certainly there on the party's fringe. Now that immigration is declining, however, none of the Tories I spoke to believe that it poses an existential threat. There will be wrangling over free movement, then compromises—and then something else to do.

Another core Conservative value used to be aristocracy, which is why Wellington's Tories refused to countenance reforming the franchise in the early 1830s, preferring to go into opposition, where they continued to dig in against the Great Reform Bill for as long as they dared. But in the end, after much parliamentary attrition and an election defeat, they folded by abstaining in the Lords. Something similar happened 80 years later when, after fiercely resisting the People's Budget, the Conservative-dominated Lords eventually acquiesced in its own weakening through the Parliament Act. The Tory Party, then, has often been cantankerous, but—as Geoffrey Wheatcroft ▸

wrote in these pages in June 2017—its redeeming virtue has always been "knowing when to stop." So maybe, in the Brexit context, it will revert to that traditional wisdom.

In other moods and circumstances, the Conservatives have been ready to embrace practical change—as when Disraeli extended the vote to working-class householders in the boroughs in 1867. Once again, in theory, this should have spelt ruin. The Conservative frontbench lost its more dogged (or principled) reactionaries, such as the future Lord Salisbury who resigned. But having no chance of reversing the tide for democracy, and with nowhere else to go, he soon came back on board. All this ancient history might suggest that ending up with—say—a soft Brexit will produce nothing more than a passing sulk from high-falutin' Europhobes like Jacob Rees-Mogg.

> "In France, decolonisation broke the Constitution. In Britain, the party that had declared Victoria Empress hailed the wind of change"

But might Brexit be different because it is about the "direction of the nation"? Surely there can be no compromise over that for a patriotic party? History suggests exactly the opposite: think of decolonisation. It was so painful for establishment forces in France that it produced not the fall of a mere political party, but the collapse of a constitutional order, the Fourth Republic. In Britain, by contrast, the same Conservative Party that had crowned Victoria as Empress of India proved up to leading the process, with Harold Macmillan's Wind of Change. Another even more fateful schism came in the 1930s: appeasement versus rearmament. The nation's fate turned on the outcome, but the party proved perfectly able to adjust from the complacency of Baldwin and Chamberlain to the bombast of Churchill without falling to pieces. Indeed, some supporters of Munich, such as Rab Butler, went on to play starring post-war roles.

Losing interests

At this point, Brexiteers might be concluding that the Conservatives can go for as hard an exit as they like, and count on the Europhiles such as Ken Clarke and Anna Soubry to suck up the new realities. But adaptable as they are, it is wrong to presume that the Tories can make up after any row.

Rare disputes really have torn them apart. These have tended to be rows in which the real issue is not abstractions—about ideas, or even the nation—but raw questions of interest. The archetypal case is the Corn Laws, which the Tories had originally imposed to protect landowners from imported grain. Robert Peel scrapped them because he could see that social and economic progress would not be served by artificially costly food. Two-thirds of his largely-landowning MPs disagreed, and voted against him: he prevailed only with opposition support. It took a generation for the party to piece itself together again.

In the early 20th century, the Conservatives suffered another ruinous row—again about free trade. By then, the Tories had accepted Peel's conclusions, but the late 19th century had brought an infusion of Whig Imperialists and Liberal Unionists fleeing Gladstone's late radicalism. Some retained an un-Tory fondness for grand schemes—as in Joseph Chamberlain's case. He wanted to tighten imperial bonds by charging levies on wares from outside the Empire, a sort of anti-European customs union if you like. Some factory owners liked the sound of that, and he prevailed within what was becoming the Conservative and Unionist party. But the voters were having none of it. The Liberals campaigned on the "big loaf" of free trade over the "small loaf" of protection and wiped the Tories out.

Although the First World War rekindled Conservative fortunes, tariffs and trade continued to be as toxic as they are proving today. The Tories won an election handsomely in 1922 by promising not to put up tariffs, but Baldwin became convinced that they were necessary and so felt obliged to call another just one year later to get a mandate for protection. He lost so many seats that the first Labour government was formed.

The Tory story on Europe

So where does Brexit sit in the light of this backstory of rows, regular regroups and occasional serious splits? Europe is not, of course, a new dividing line. It is easy to forget now, but for much of the time, it was handled without serious difficulty. Eden was fiercely against "going in," but his successor Macmillan was staunchly pro. The divisions were still there when Heath took Britain in and Thatcher pushed the single market. But in the 1970s and 80s, the "anti-marketeers" were oddballs like Enoch Powell and Teddy Taylor, an unusual blend of an animal rights supporter and a hanging obsessive.

Things got more serious after the lady herself turned in her Bruges speech, and pro-Europeanism became linked in many eyes—including her own—with the "betrayal" that ousted her. Rank and file suspicions of a European "plot" for integration were stoked by Norman Tebbit on the conference platform and Thatcher herself off-stage right. Then, under John Major the previously-obscure Eurosceptics Bill Cash, Teresa Gorman and Iain Duncan Smith achieved prominence, along with Tony Marlow in his boating club blazer. The PM was caught describing Eurosceptic cabinet colleagues as "bastards," and by 1997, two dedicated upstarts were snapping at the party's heels: Ukip and James Goldsmith's Referendum Party. The infighting reached such a fever pitch that Major was forced to revise and re-record an election broadcast about Europe.

That year saw the divided Conservatives endure a rout, but it wasn't clear that the European issue would, in itself, consign the Tories to the margin for long. Under first William Hague, and then Duncan Smith and Michael Howard, they converged on a newly-sceptical line. The rhetoric—"In Europe, but not run by Europe"—reeked of compromise, yet that is often the essence of politics, and in rejecting the euro, the Conservatives were in tune with the country. They began recovering in votes in 2001 and seats in 2005, and when the young David Cameron took up the reins and told his party to stop banging on about Europe, there was no great backlash. To the casual observer, it may have looked like one more Conservative rift had healed.

But the truth is that Cameron, a casual Eurosceptic, never felt able to ignore the zealots. Even in opposition he pulled the Tories out of the European People's Party, and in government he wielded a posturing veto concerning the eurozone crisis that put Britain

The splits the Tories sailed through...

Catholic Emancipation, 1829

Long-surviving PM Lord Liverpool's cabinet was so split on the subject of allowing "Papists" into public life that he banned his ministers from mentioning it. George IV was bitterly opposed to any liberalisation, and so too were ultra-Tory politicians, like the Duke of Wellington (pictured). But London's difficulties in running majority-Catholic Ireland only got worse. After Wellington became PM, he let the measure through, and yet somehow held "the party of the Established Church" together.

The franchise, 1832-1928

Wellington was also a reactionary on the franchise—his party preferred to go into opposition than attempt change. It fought the Great Reform Act in the Lords, but ultimately averted a constitutional crisis by abstaining. It soon adjusted, and in 1867 Conservative opportunist Disraeli (pictured) "dished the Whigs" by handing working-class householders a vote. The hardline future Lord Salisbury resigned, but soon he was back and winning elections under the mass democracy he'd feared. The next question was votes for women, but this divided the Liberals more than the Tories.

Decolonisation, 1957-1980

The Conservatives were always the party of Empire—Disraeli made Victoria Empress of India, Churchill was fanatical about holding on to it, and it was a defining cause for Tory activists in "Primrose League." But it was under the Conservatives that the Gold Coast became Ghana in 1957, after which colonies fell like dominoes. Rather than resist, in 1960 Macmillan (pictured) went to apartheid South Africa, of all places, to declare an unstoppable "Wind of Change" was blowing for majority rule. African decolonisation was completed in 1980 when Thatcher, with some misgivings, signed off on the creation of Zimbabwe.

...and the rows that did for them

Corn Laws, 1846

After the Napoleonic wars ended, corn prices fell, and the Tories—the landlords' party—imposed tariffs and restrictions on imports to protect domestic farming. But, as ever, costly food proved controversial, not only with a restive working class but with the rising class of industrialists that employed them. Tory PM Robert Peel resolved that the Corn Laws had to go, even if it meant going to war with his party. It did. The party was torn asunder, and didn't serve a full term again until the 1870s.

Protection, 1900s and 1920s

Although the Tories turned against Peel, they gradually absorbed his free trade thinking. But a new version of the old argument arrived in the person of Joseph Chamberlain, a radical-turned-Imperialist, who was effectively absorbed into the Tory fold. He advocated "imperial preference"—duties on goods from outside the Empire. The voters rejected it in 1906. But the issue didn't go away: some industrialists liked the idea of protection. Stanley Baldwin judged the Tories had to take the step they'd promised not to, and sought a mandate, with an early election in 1923. He bled support, and the first Labour government followed.

Europe, 1990-present day

There were always Conservative Eurosceptics, but in the 1970s and 80s they were on the margins—the party of business backed the Common Market. But at the end of her tenure, Thatcher began to resent "federalism," and Europhobia took hold among right-wingers who resented her downfall. The party converged on a clear anti-federalist line, but the die-hards pushed until they secured—and won—the Brexit vote. The party remains split down the middle on how to implement it.

ILLUSTRATION BY NICK TAYLOR

outside the room. And within months of Ukip's mid-term surge in the polls he had conceded the referendum that would destroy him.

A schism made on Fleet Street

Why? Sure, immigration was popularly perceived as a problem, but Europe itself virtually never registered among the top issues for the voters. Cameron felt little need to pander to the hard right on gay rights, race relations or crime.

In unravelling this mystery, we also get to the divide that the Conservatives—going right up to cabinet level, who cheerfully spoke to me off the record—all agreed was now the most fateful for their party's future. It is not the divide between Leavers and Remainers, but rather the divisions between Leavers of different sorts.

The undoubted preoccupation with Europhobia in Cameron's mind, and its continuing clout in the Conservative Party, originally arose because of the attitude of papers like the *Sun* and the *Telegraph*, and it reflects the worldview of offshore owners Rupert Murdoch and the Barclay brothers. These border-straddling businessmen had no wish to see Britain retreat behind trade barriers. Rather they envisaged an island economy that would cut free of the continent, slash tax and red tape and then be—in the words of the Barclay-owned *Spectator*'s pre-referendum cover—"Out, and into the world."

Many "Leave" voters out in the country would like to get back to the days, imagined or otherwise, where "Brits buying British" resulted in good manufacturing jobs. In a NatCen Social Research poll, half of them thought Britain should limit imports to protect the UK economy; other polls have found that Leavers are far less interested in cutting global trade deals than curbing

immigration and reclaiming sovereignty. The odd Tory backbencher reflects this a bit: in June, Edward Leigh told the Commons how he admired Donald Trump's willingness to tackle the Chinese for dumping cheap goods on world markets. But there is little overt protectionism within today's parliamentary party.

The three most prominent Brexiteers in the cabinet, Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and David Davis, all have at least some libertarian tendencies, the first two being journalists who have some of the same aversion to regulation as the press barons. Far from being a sincere "pull up the drawbridge" man, Johnson once advocated bringing Turkey into the EU. All of them talk—as do hardliners outside the government, such as John Redwood and Rees-Mogg—as if Brexit's end result will be Britain trading more freely.

Their difficulty is that this is almost bound to be untrue, at least in the short term. Yes, there is a theoretical Brexit that involves unilateral abolition of all tariffs, which is roughly what is advocated by the Thatcherite economist Patrick Minford. Boffins can disregard shuttered steel factories and bankrupt farms if their models show that the economy will become more productive overall. But no politician can stand for election on that sort of punt: it is not the way the real world has ever worked. Even the "no-deal" fallback of "WTO terms," which hardliners such as Redwood insist Britain must be ready to embrace, would require the imposition of some tariffs on trade with Europe. Trade deals with the wider world will take many years to hammer out—if they are possible in a world where Trump's mercantilism is increasingly defining the mood.

> "One Remainer says a Gove premiership might now be the best hope for securing the required Brexit compromise"

So while Conservative MPs are overwhelmingly free-traders in principle, the big divide to watch is that between those Leavers who (along with the Remainers) have some feel for how to give that free-trading principle practical effect, and those who are happy to dwell in a theoretical marketopia. Neither group, it is worth reiterating, is in tune with the many nostalgic "Leave" voters out in the country. But if it becomes Conservative policy to reject all tacks and compromise, to embrace immediate disruption in the hope of glory and riches later, then the psephological consequences could be severe. "Leave" voters who thought they were securing "control" would end up being served with chaos and the economic insecurity that it brings.

In this fraught environment, as one thoughtful Tory Remainer put it to me, "compromises are plainly needed, but we're at the point where—politically—it is only a Leaver who is going to have the scope to make them." And so, inevitably, we come to the question of leadership. He suggested Gove as the one Leaver with the creativity to perform the requisite swerves. But Johnson's deliberately-overheard after-dinner ramblings about the May government's failings and how he is "increasingly admiring" of Trump the trade warrior confirms that his personal ambitions will not be held back by any free trade idealism. Johnson, let's not

Poll: Can the Tories still cope in a crisis?

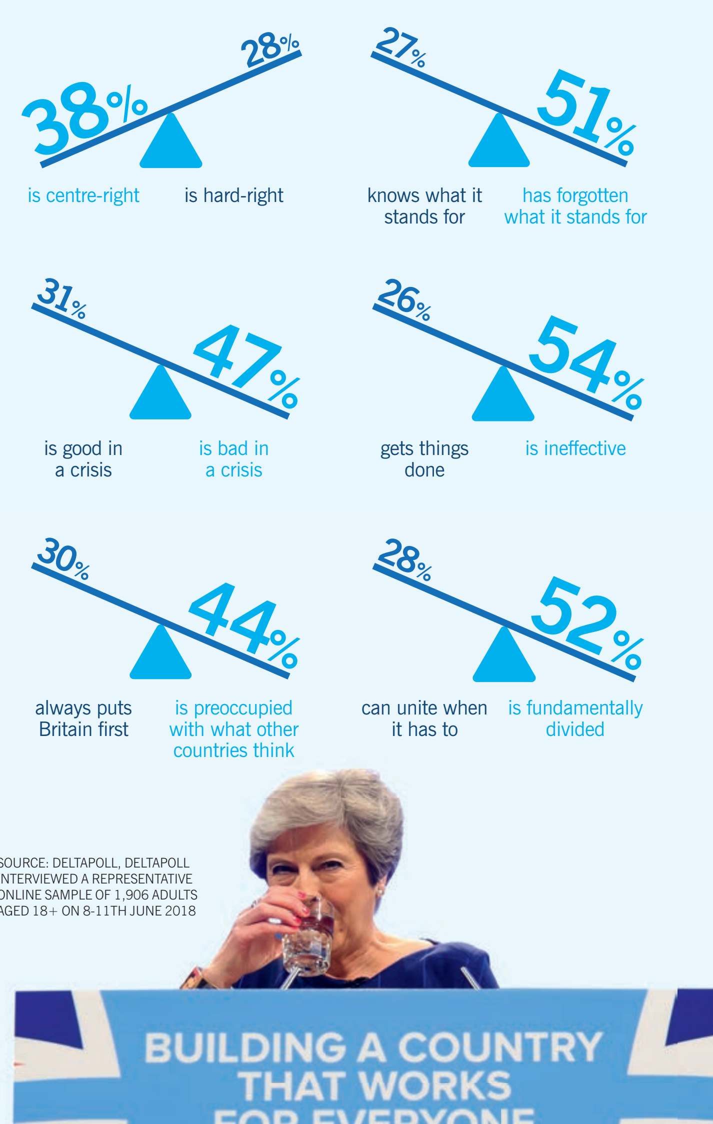
The perils of Brexit for the Conservatives are thrown into sharp relief by our exclusive Deltapoll survey. The party has often been charged with being heartless, but May faces the thorny problems that Brexit poses without being thought to possess the virtue that the Tories have often enjoyed in the eyes of the voters: hard-headed competence.

Twice as many voters believe the party is ineffective as believe it "gets things done." And by a 16 point margin, they rate it as "bad in a crisis," which strongly suggests Brexit is taking its toll. When pollsters ICM asked the same "crisis" question about David Cameron personally, as unemployment was peaking in late 2011, he achieved a net +10.

The party may be relieved that the voters as a whole regard it as centre-right, not hard right, but in the underlying data it turns out that this is not true with Remainers. Its vulnerability to populist attack, including on Brexit, is confirmed: more voters think it is "internationalist, and preoccupied with what other governments think" than believe it is patriotic, and will put Britain first.

At the same time, by nearly a two-to-one margin, voters believe that the Conservatives have forgotten what they stand for. And by a similarly crushing margin, they do not believe it is "capable of uniting when it has to," but instead regard it as "fundamentally divided."

Do you think today's Conservative Party...



SOURCE: DELTAPOLL, DELTAPOLL INTERVIEWED A REPRESENTATIVE ONLINE SAMPLE OF 1,906 ADULTS AGED 18+ ON 8-11TH JUNE 2018

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forget, was "veering all over the place like a shopping trolley" until the last minute before the referendum, penning two drafts of his *Telegraph* column, one declaring for "Leave," and the other "Remain." Let's imagine that enough Tories were happy to overcome their doubts about his character, and put him in No 10. For all his "no surrender" posturing on the length of the transition and the customs union, I'd bank on him folding on the details with the same carefree chutzpah that Disraeli (whose pro-Corn Laws passion rose after Peel had passed over him for promotion) did in extending the franchise. Naked careerism to the rescue of the Conservatives? Stranger things have happened before.

And if Britain were to tack quickly back towards basic alignment with the European economy, under the cover of a Gove or Johnson premiership, then the various factions of the party might stand a chance—as one Brexit fence-sitter puts it—of "remaining friends." The "real problem," the unmendable breach, would arise, another suggested, if "the obsessives" held the whip hand. That could happen in two ways. First, and more obviously, May could be forced out after a confidence vote, then someone like Rees-Mogg could get his name on the ballot and go on and win among the small, elderly and Europhobic Tory selectorate. But secondly, a weakened May could cling on but be so imprisoned by the zealots that she ends up lurching towards (or blundering into) an abrupt divorce from the continent.

This is not impossible to imagine. Although May has moved towards compromising on Ireland, and recently appeared to give some ground to the Remainer rebels who want a parliamentary veto on Brexit, she has been giving messages that are hopelessly—and, for her, perilously—mixed. Painfully aware of being a Remainer in the Brexit moment, she has created many rods for her own back, such as her "just say no" refusal to allow any continuing role for the European Court of Justice, an institution most "Leave" voters have never heard of. She acts with Conservative common sense in seeking to postpone hard decisions until they have to be made, but is constrained by the running down of the Article 50 clock which she set in motion in an un-Conservative moment of abandon. Seeing as she restricted her own wriggle room, and imposed a hard deadline on herself, it is not unreasonable for hard Brexiteers to judge that they have got the PM where they want her. And, as a result, the chances of a seriously disruptive divorce is rising—something which has the potential to do lasting damage to the party which will then own the consequences.

The electoral risks ought to be obvious, in a context where centre-right parties are everywhere confronting anger from people who are feeling forgotten. All the more so in Britain, where—as our new polling shows, to the left and on p30—the Conservatives are no longer trusted to keep cool in a crisis, to get things done or to represent ordinary people. And as in those fateful bust-ups over imperial preference and the Corn Laws, core Conservative interests could be compromised.

For if and when Britain leaves the single market, the "passporting" rights of the City—a bastion of financial support for the party—to trade throughout the continent will go. Remainers inside government tell me that they do see the potential for managing the consequences, but only if sensible and cordial relations with Europe are contained. As Nicolas Véron wrote in these pages at the end of last year, where losses of perhaps a tenth of the City's activity are probably already baked in to Brexit, a quarter could easily be vulnerable if we get the detail wrong. In that event, a hole in the public finances would compound the misery of a government already confronting anxiety out in the country. At the same time, a lonelier Britain, and its currency, could become newly vulnerable in financial markets which have indulged its current account deficits—a doubling down of the effect that we saw in 2016, when sterling sank after the "Leave" vote. Savers wouldn't like that. As for industry, it is already starting to ask searching questions about who it trusts to run things in its interest. In June the President of the CBI, Paul Drechsler, was blunt: while the government was "playing politics," he said, "in the world of business, we're frustrated. We're angry."

A chaotic Brexit could set the interests of nostalgic "Leave" voters in the country against those of the free-trading libertarian visionaries who have, somewhat peculiarly, become their champions in Westminster. It would run risks with the "sound money" savers who have always been the backbone of Conservative support, and at the same time alienate some of the financiers and entrepreneurs who have traditionally provided the financial backing. That sounds like the kind of cocktail of circumstances which might poison a political party—even one that's been bouncing back from all sorts of scrapes for 300 years. P

Tom Clark is Editor of Prospect

Download and listen to *Headspace*, *Prospect*'s free podcast, at: **prospectmagazine.co.uk**, iTunes, or wherever you get your podcasts. Tom Clark will be joined by Andrew Gamble to discuss the plight of the political right in Europe and the UK

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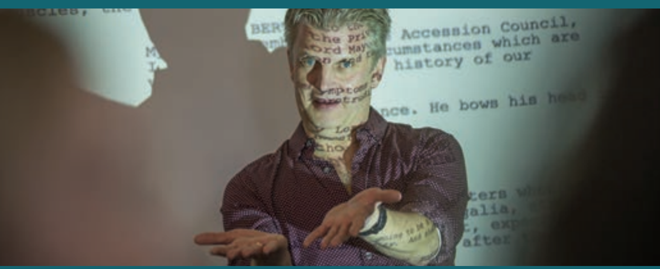

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True blues

Modern Europe was forged and long governed by forces of the moderate right. But now they're on the slide—and the continent has reason to fear

ANDREW GAMBLE

Since the 2008 financial crash much ink has been spilled on the demise of the centre-left across Europe. Here in Britain it hastened the demise of New Labour, while in Germany it turned the SPD into a perennial junior coalition partner. They were the lucky ones. The once-dominant Pasok has been wiped out in Greece, the Socialist Party of François Mitterrand sunk to fifth at the presidential elections last year, while the Labour Party in the Netherlands slumped from coalition government to an embarrassing seventh.

The avowedly progressive side of the ideological spectrum is, perhaps ironically, always the more given to gloomy introspection. But this time its anguish appeared to be justified. For the best part of a decade after a crisis that exposed much that was rotten in the old order, events appeared to be playing out against those forces that wanted to reform it. That pattern may have seemed surprising to some, but perhaps not to students of Britain's political history in the 1920s, 1930s or indeed 1980s. Hard times once again appeared to be shoring up the establishment.

Meanwhile, support for the centre-right remained solid. For many years after the crash, the parties that helped forge the post-war "west" and have run it for most of the time since sometimes looked as strong as ever. Angela Merkel was able to increase her vote in 2013, a feat matched by David Cameron in 2015, when he succeeded in swatting the challenge from Ukip out of the way and winning an unexpected overall majority. Other insurgent anti-establishment parties were, on the whole, being held at bay. Given the economic battering western democracies have faced since 2008, the resilience of the old political order was remarkable. But will this last much longer?

In the last year or two, elections—and in the UK a referendum, too—have begun to indicate that the centre-right forces, like their centre-left counterparts, are now on the defensive. In Germany, in France, in the UK and latterly in Italy they have proved unable to command majorities, and seen their core support shrink and with it their ability to form governments. The arrival of the anti-immigration Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) to challenge Merkel is the perfect illustration of what is going on; new parties and movements, particularly from the populist nationalist right, have risen to challenge them across the continent. These paint centre-right parties as part of the cosmopolitan elite, committed to supranationalism and the global market and as much a part of the problem as the rootless centre-left. Some centre-right parties have aped the language and policies of the far-right, others have tried to stand firm for moderation; but almost all have seen their support slip.

Could it be that the solidity of the traditional centre-right was only the creation of specific historical circumstances? Specifically, the destruction of the main fascist regimes in the Second World War; strong nation states with settled borders in its wake; and, on the international stage, the idea of a western alliance. And, if the insurgents continue to make ground, might we see the demise of the forces of moderation and the return to a new era of nationalism and authoritarianism in Europe?

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Under pressure: Angela Merkel's rule in Germany is being challenged by a resurgent extreme right

Rise from the ashes

The centre-right has been the dominant political force in many European countries for much of the last 70 years. Various forms of Christian Democracy proved particularly successful in Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries, while Gaullism often triumphed in France and the "One Nation" aspect of Conservatism was—in reality—always a huge part of the Tory coalition in Britain, notwithstanding Margaret Thatcher's insistence that the middle of the road was a good place for getting run over.

These were all different movements, shaped by particular national histories and institutions, but they also shared common ideas and common purposes. They were key architects of the new national consensus that helped to rebuild each country after the Second World War, and—more often than not—they continued to run their nations for many decades after that. British Conservatives have occupied No 10 for 59 per cent of the period since the Second World War; until the rise of Emmanuel Macron last year, politicians of the French centre-right controlled the Élysée Palace for 66 per cent of the life of the Fifth Republic from 1958, and the Matignon for 67 per of the time; meanwhile, in Germany, the Chancellor of the Federal Republic has been a Christian Democrat for 71 per cent of the period since its inception in 1949.

These, then, were the parties that defined the political order. They were nationalist, but almost all of them (Gaullism was the big exception) were also Atlanticist. They were willing allies of the United States and participants in the new world order, with its institutions, alliances and its presumption for increasingly free international trade. In domestic politics they all accepted a capitalist market economy but often allied with a strong belief that serious efforts should be made to spread the benefits of private ownership far and wide. They also accepted a significant role for the post-war state in providing universal basic services, and a welfare safety net.

> "Centre-right politicians were the chief builders of the European project: it embedded peace"

The early years of reconstruction were hard in many countries but from the early 1950s onwards a period of unparalleled prosperity and economic advance

How the centre-right has fallen

UK—Conservatives

Historical strength
Britain's established party of government, the Conservatives ruled for 35 out of 46 years from 1951 to 1997.

Current weakness
Has won a majority just once in the last six elections. Currently torn, once again, over Europe.

Germany—CDU

Historical strength
The German chancellor has been a Christian Democrat for 71 per cent of the time since the Federal Republic was created in 1951.

Current weakness
Angela Merkel shed votes last year as the nationalist AfD surged. And after she goes, the party will struggle to hold on to the personal vote she has built up in her long years at the top.

France—The Republicans

Historical strength
Controlled the Élysée and the Matignon for two-thirds of the life of the Fifth Republic.

Current weakness
For the first time in the Fifth Republic's history, the centre-right failed to make the second round of the presidential election last year. Its coalition won less than a quarter of the seats in the assembly elections.

Italy—Christian Democracy

Historical strength
From 1946 to 1994 it served in every government, and between 1953 and 1979 its vote never dropped below 38 per cent.

Current weakness
They no longer exist thanks to a corruption scandal. Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia, which calls itself a centre-right party, came fourth in March's elections.

began, over much of which centre-right governments presided. Industry modernised, education expanded, and—through rising wages, developing pensions and the growth of home ownership—the resulting prosperity was widely spread. After the political traumas of the 1930s and 1940s, the moderate parties of the centre-right seemed to have found a winning formula. They were able to guarantee external security through the Atlantic Alliance and domestic prosperity through an expanding economy which delivered for the majority of citizens. A solid electoral bloc was created that made the centre-right parties the leading political force.

Their success was entrenched through the consensus formed with other democratic parties, particularly those of the centre-left. Although they remained fierce electoral rivals there was basic agreement on some key policies, particularly the Atlantic Alliance, anti-Communism, and Keynesian welfare state capitalism, and also on institutions and procedures that made liberal democracy possible, particularly the rule of law and civil, political and social rights for all citizens. That meant that parties of the centre-right and centre-left could alternate in government and implement different policies without the foundations of the post-war order being called into question. Even Italy, where such smooth alternation in power was precluded because the perennial opposition was the Italian Communist Party, there was increasing co-operation with the Christian Democrats during the "historic compromise" of the 1970s. In the decades after 1945, every western European democracy reached its own historic compromise between rival political forces.

This political rapprochement within national borders also helped to enable an additional rapprochement across them. Leaders of the centre-right—Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Amintore Fanfani, Edward Heath, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and Helmut Kohl—were also key architects of the moves to European integration which resulted in the creation of the European Community, the Common Market and eventually the European Union. Four of the six leaders who signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957 were Christian Democrats. There were some dissenting voices on the centre-right, notably Charles de Gaulle, and in her latter years, Thatcher, but the great majority of centre-right politicians were supporters of the European project; they saw it as embedding peace and co-operation, liberal democracy, and shared growth and prosperity.

All the European centre-right parties were "catch-all" parties. They sought to make a broad national appeal in order to win as many votes as possible. This meant that they were themselves coalitions, sometimes with organised left and right factions, and always with different wings, which would wax and wane at different times. The parties were less weighed down by ideology than those on the left, and were remarkably adaptable to the circumstances of time and place. For example, in Britain where the corporatist post-war settlement came economically unstuck earlier than most, during the 1970s, the Conservative Party evolved Thatcherism, the political programme I once characterised as the "Free Economy and The Strong State." Later on, many other centre-right

You can't teach an old dog new tricks: the old centre-right, in the guise of François Fillon, pictured opposite, failed to make the second round of the French presidential election for the first time last year

© GUILLAUME DESTOMBES/REX SHUTTERSTOCK

politicians elsewhere on the continent—think of Nicolas Sarkozy in France—would experiment with the same blend as they sought to overhaul their own parties for new times.

As the economics of the centre-right became harder, there were attempts to soften its harsh edges—sometimes from within the bloc itself, and sometimes from outside. In the later 1990s, the centre-right was electorally eclipsed for a time by Third Way social democracy, and most EU countries had a centre-left government. The Third Way introduced some distinctive policies aimed at promoting greater social justice but it was content to govern within the constraints of the new international consensus which emphasised deregulation, privatisation, financialisation, low tax rates, and liberalisation of the movement of capital, goods and people. The centre-right was not defeated in the battle of ideas—some argue it was never truly challenged.

> "Populist nationalists promsie a return to hard borders, national currencies and protectionist economies"

After 2008, when many of those Third Way centre-left parties suffered such a battering, the old centre-right stood ready to profit—trusted by voters to handle the consequences of the crash and to restore economic health through austerity. But the centre-right has now found it difficult to deliver a convincing economic recovery. The eurozone crisis in 2010-12 was surmounted, but many of the underlying problems of trying to run a monetary union without a political union and a fiscal union remain; living standards are stagnant, and unemployment, particularly among the young, has been high. Only in 2017-18 did the eurozone return to economic growth, but this remains fragile and has as yet done little to offset the big squeeze of recent years. Much more than in the 1980s and 1990s, when the fashionable assumption was that everyone would benefit from an expanding economy, there is more anxiety about the unequal spread of incomes and ownership today, and nagging doubts about whether those at the bottom of the heap will actually share in any restored growth.

A still bigger challenge for the centre-right than economics has proved to be immigration. Even a slow-growing European economy has been a magnet for economic migrants and asylum seekers. The numbers seeking to enter the EU has fuelled the growth of populist nationalist parties in many places, and has aided the election of nationalist governments in Hungary and Poland. Established parties of the centre-right and centre-left held the line against the populist nationalists in western Europe, but this changed in 2018 when Lega Nord and the Five Star Movement between them won a majority of the seats in the Italian parliament. Their newly-formed coalition government now has the potential to upend the nation's constitutional order. Even in Germany, the hegemony of the ruling CDU has been challenged by the rise of the AfD which began as a Eurosceptic party but has now made immigration its major issue. As for France, while centrist politics may appear to be in the ascendancy with the election of Macron over Marine Le Pen, the old centre-right—in the guise of François Fillon—failed to reach the second round of the presidential election for the first time since the founding of the Fifth Republic.

The nationalist threat

Is there any longer a viable socially liberal, internationalist centre-right formula for government? The strength of the European centre-right parties in the past was that they combined a commitment to international co-operation through Nato and the EU with a domestic politics based on the promise they could secure prosperity, keep citizens safe, and to nurture those traditional social values and shared identity on which national solidarity rested. They addressed the concerns of voters on all six of what psychologist Jonathan Haidt has defined as the moral foundations of politics: care, fairness, liberty, loyalty, authority and sanctity. This made them formidable opponents to the centre-left, who often struggled to challenge them on anything other than the "care" and "fairness" dimensions.

Today, however, the centre-right confronts populist nationalists, who argue that "establishment elites" of the left and the right alike are in hock to international institutions and alliances, which leave them unable and unwilling to control borders and restore prosperity. At least where "native" citizens are concerned, the populists deploy the old social democrat charge that the centre-right establishment is lacking in care and fairness. But they also attack it in areas of its traditional strength—for a lack of loyalty to the nation, and a lack of will to defend what is sacred about it against the vicissitudes of international commerce and migration. At a time when the authority of Europe's centre-right is also challenged by its failure to achieve more than an anaemic recovery then, on the Haidt schema of values, the centre-right is left only with "liberty" as its calling card, ▶

and libertarianism has on its own not often been a winning electoral formula.

Populist nationalists promise a return to hard borders, national currencies, protectionist economies and in many cases the restoration of social conservatism. This is not just a European phenomenon. The populist nationalists secured their biggest breakthrough with the election of Donald Trump in 2016. As he dallies with trade wars, he undermines one crucial element of the "free economy" agenda which Ronald Reagan, like Thatcher, married to the muscular state. As Trump's grip on the Republican Party tightens, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the familiar alliance it achieved between the modernising forces of business and social tradition can be put back together again. Economic protection has not yet spread from the populists to the mainstream right in Europe, but—with speculation about trade war in the air—who can be sure that this will not happen? If it does, then the old centre-right parties of Europe could be in for the sort of convulsions that are already juddering through the US political establishment.

Steve Bannon, one of the major players in Trump's victory, has spoken of his hopes for an international Tea Party, uniting the populist movement in the US with parties like the Front National, Lega Nord and AfD in Europe. In Bannon's Manichean worldview the political, cultural and corporate elites, which established the post-national order and continue to govern it, are the enemy. This insurgency against the elites feeds on resentment of their power and wealth and their perceived disdain for national identities and national interests.

The great difficulty the centre-right parties face today in countering this attack is that the current economic impasse is unprecedented in modern times. There have been ups and downs of the economic cycle and sometimes more prolonged periods of painful adjustment, such as the 1970s in Britain and Italy. But recessions were always short-lived, on average 18 months, and recoveries mostly vigorous and sustained. Centre-right parties always used to think they had the keys to prosperity. The growing number of citizens who had a stake in the economy through home ownership, pensions and savings provided a natural pool of support for the centre-right, easily scared by centre-left proposals to raise taxes or increase borrowing. The hope that each generation could do better than its parents was, for many voters, reason enough to stick with the centre-right custodians of the established economic order.

But now, post-crisis, in Britain and many other countries too, sky-high house prices, stagnant pay and insecure work patterns are making that old story of generational progress a less plausible sell. More immediately, there is exhaustion in the face of retrenching governments that have for so long been promising a more prosperous tomorrow, which never seems to arrive. European voters have mostly not turned back to the centre-left as they used to when the pendulum swung, but instead to populist nationalists—not necessarily believing that the populist nationalists can improve their situation, but as a protest against an establishment that is no longer delivering on what it promised. Can this slide towards populist nationalism be resisted? The forces of economic and cultural resentment are powerful. Until the economic impasse is decisively shrugged off, the balance is likely to tilt further away from the establishment parties.

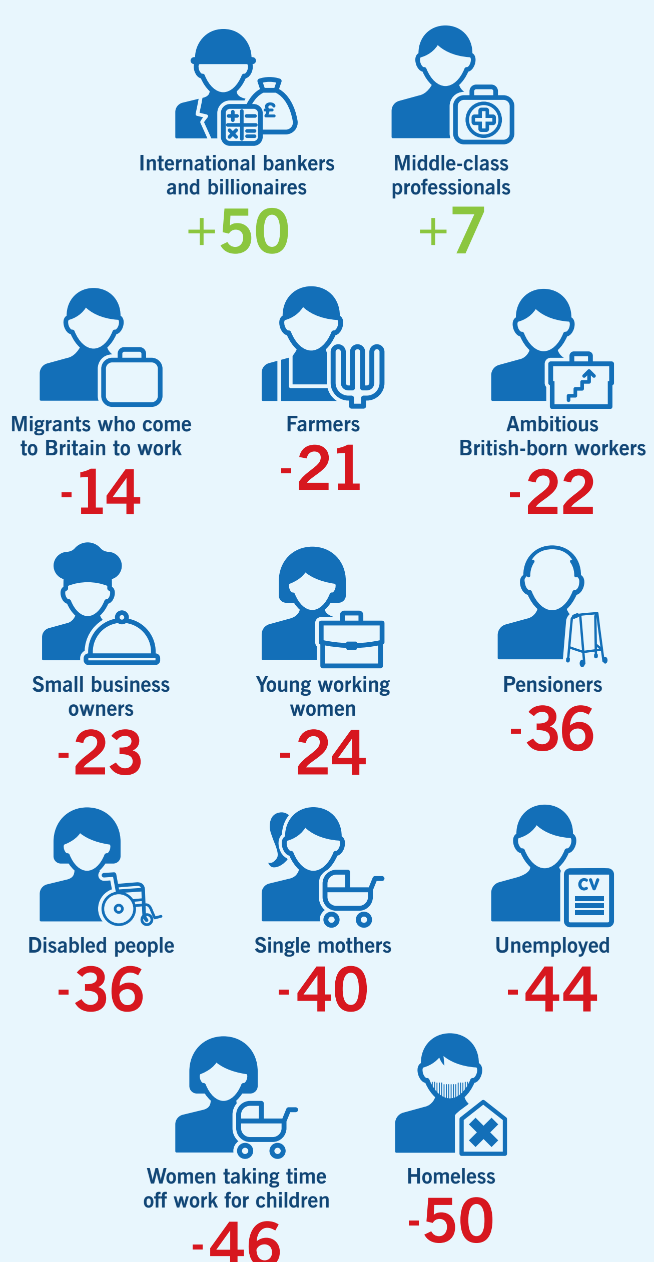
The centre-right urgently needs a strategy to resist further loss of support. The most favoured option thus far has been to

Poll: Who do the Tories stand for today?

When populism is in the air, the question that counts is "which side are you on?" The British Conservatives have been a centre-right success story because they've cultivated support beyond the elite—cautious savers, rural communities and workers with ambitions to better themselves. But how far is that true today?

Deltapoll asked 1,906 voters about whether the Tories were, or were not, concerned with "the interests" of various groups. The graphic shows the difference between the two scores. So for example, 45 per cent thought they were concerned about "professionals such as headteachers, GPs and accountants," 38 per cent thought they weren't, to give the net +7 points shown.

The scores are overwhelmingly negative. Some, like the homeless (-50) confirm a heartless image. Less familiar, and more worrying, is a perception that the party doesn't give a fig for traditional core supporters like farmers (-21) and small businessmen (-23). At the same time, a perceived preoccupation with bankers and billionaires (+50) suggests vulnerability to populist attack.



SOURCE: DELTAPOLL

move on to the ground already occupied by the populists: talking tough on immigration, law and order, and traditional values, while offering at the same time somehow—through means which are often unclear—to protect jobs and living standards. Some in the centre-right parties will glance at Hungary, Poland, Turkey and—perhaps—the United States, and see the pioneers of a newly "illiberal democracy" reaping rewards after disdaining international institutions, democratic norms and constitutional safeguards. Increasingly more concerned with the threat from populist nationalists on their right than from social democrats on their left, once mainstream parties are increasingly ready to step away from the old centre ground. This is a difficult strategy to get right because the populist nationalists are able to outbid the mainstream party: a promise to reduce immigration sounds rather tame compared to a call to close the borders.

> "Moving on to the nationalists' ground on immigration risks upsetting the liberal wing of the coalition"

Another problem is that moving on to the ground of the nationalists, particularly on immigration and economic protection, risks upsetting the liberal wing of the old centre-right coalition. Its parties used to thrive by appealing to a wide spread of voters while also persuading most right-wing activists too that one big centre-right party is the best way to secure office and implement conservative policies. The activists have accepted that debates about priorities and purposes are best resolved internally. But this only works if there are means to secure compromises between the different factions, and if each faction feels itself sufficiently represented and respected within the party. If centre-right parties move too far towards those voters attracted by the strident messages of the populist nationalists, they may fracture their internal coalition. In the UK context, for example, the part of the winning 1980s coalition that was more concerned with the "free economy" half of the Thatcherite programme could begin to balk at the Tories if they became overwhelmingly fixated instead on the strong national state.

The crumbling bulwark

Brexit might seem to make Britain a unique case at the moment, but in fact the many problems it poses can be seen as a particular instance of the dilemmas that the European centre-right is grappling with everywhere. The Leave vote remains a crushing blow to moderate, outward-looking Conservatism in Britain: 57 per cent of the voters who gave David Cameron his majority in 2015 turned round a year later, ignored the advice that he and much of the rest of establishment gave, and voted to pull Britain out of the bloc that had been a cornerstone of its economic and foreign policy for two generations.

Although Cameron's successor would have the satisfaction of watching Ukip crumble, Theresa May continued to govern as if she faced another imminent populist threat. She spoke not only about the economic grievances of the "just about managing," but also charges global elites who work across national borders with being "citizens of nowhere." More concretely, although she voted "Remain" herself, on moving into No 10 she felt obliged to give a maximalist interpretation of the "Brexit mandate," even though this gives her all manner of difficulties in a parliament where there was never any majority for a "hard" exit, and especially not since she squandered Conservative seats in an early election. The parliamentary mandate and the referendum mandate are now in conflict, and it is difficult to envisage a happy resolution.

No matter that May understands that if she does pull off a hard Brexit, there could be severe economic damage that will threaten British prosperity and disillusion those many core Conservative supporters who have always put the economy first. She continues to fear—perhaps even more—that if she does not deliver a hard Brexit, taking back control of laws, borders and money, the legitimacy of British government will be undermined, and a successor to Ukip will arise to punish the Conservatives. And in the defensive crouch they adopt in the face of the populist-nationalist agenda here, the post-Brexit Tories are in sync with those centre-right forces on the continent who—until they marched out of the European People's Party in a nationalist huff a few years ago—the Conservatives used to regard as their sister parties.

Across Europe, a chill is being felt by the centre-right parties that used to be the great bulwark of the international liberal order, against a return to the authoritarian nationalisms of the past. It is not just the fate of individual leaders or even individual parties that will be determined, but the ability of those parties to continue with their historic role—in securing constitutional order at home, and honouring their nation's traditional alliances and commitments abroad. "The west" as we know it was a creation of the centre-right parties, and the effects for the west could be fateful if they do not prove able to master the grave challenges that confront them. P

Andrew Gamble is professor of politics at the University of Sheffield

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A Conservative vision

How can the right get it right?
Conservative MP Lee Rowley—part of the 2015 intake—
casts his eyes to the horizon

The conservative perspective is not always associated with big picture visions, but there is today a pressing need to demonstrate how our policies will bring a better tomorrow. It's an especially important challenge for a Conservative MP like me. For two years, Brexit has so absorbed British politics that other debates have been downgraded. Irrespective of how we all voted, we should recall that there is life beyond March 2019.

Of course, Brexit is a fundamental milestone on our national journey. But when the NHS, schools and welfare struggle for airtime between the breathless re-telling of summit dinners in Brussels, we are in a very odd place. Beyond that, the last few years have shown something is amiss in society. There is a growing dislocation between the rulers and ruled. We are facing technological change so dramatic that our basic ideas of work, rest and play could all be disrupted. How might pragmatic conservatives—or for that matter anyone else—chart a course through?

My contention is simple: western democracies, and Britain in particular, need to place greater emphasis on the long view. What do we want this country to look like in 20 years' time? What objectives are we seeking to fulfil for British citizens? And how will we deal with new challenges?

The notion of a grand national strategy conjures up natural scepticism in the pragmatic Tory mind. Visions are disdained as the semantic playthings of the oligarch and the autocrat; democracies just don't do them. Those in the west who have tried their luck at scanning more distant horizons have seldom seen their efforts rewarded. In 2008, Kevin Rudd, the former Australian PM, held a 10-day summit of 1,000 delegates to think up ideas for 2020. A year later, with less fanfare, 135 out of its 138 recommendations were abandoned.

As well as the lack of any obvious electoral rewards, those of us on the right are especially mindful of the inefficient and dehumanising results of the left's heavy-handed planning. (Just think, for example, of the refusal of 1960s tower blocks to turn into the happy, orderly streets in the sky that the bureaucrats of the day had envisaged.) And there is no doubt that debates about how to solve the most challenging questions have, all too often, defaulted towards central planning.

What business, some will ask, does conservatism have in grappling with the future? The important distinction here is between knee-jerk reaction, the attitude that seeks to hold back the tide of history, and intelligent conservatism, which seeks to manage change for the good of society. If the last 200 years since the Industrial Revolution have taught us anything, it is that pure reactionary politics is doomed: change is the only constant.

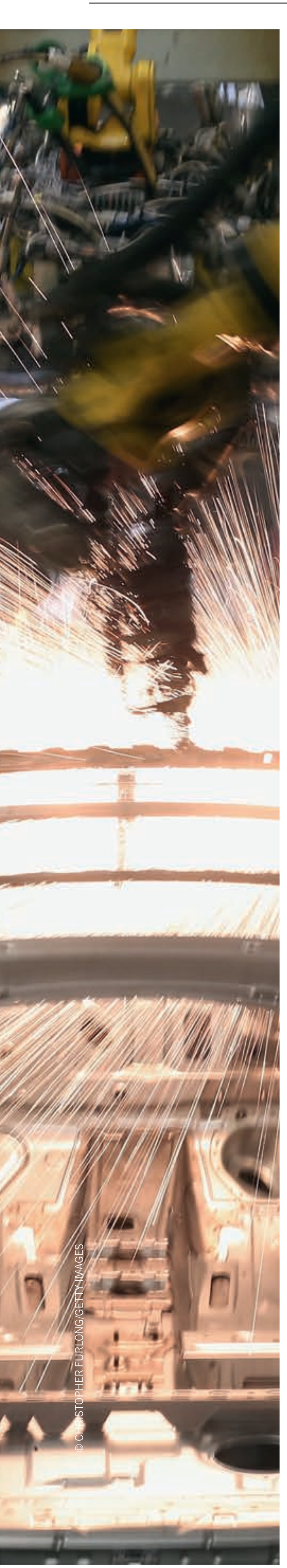
One venerable Tory virtue has always been stewardship—conserving the best of our individual and collective inheritance for the next generation—and this is a virtue which I would argue becomes more important in a world of remorseless change.

So, what are these big issues that conservatives must confront? Fundamental demographic change as our population grows older and more geographically concentrated. The suffocation of privacy by technology. The slowdown in economic growth threatening our ability to pay for our retirement, health and public services. The automation of production, and the gulf between the skills we need and those we've got. Finally, and most unnervingly, the leaching away of power from familiar institutions and towards border-straddling actors who are breathtakingly agile in avoiding attempts to impose oversight. (Yes, among other things, I'm talking about the tech giants.)

Let's focus on automation, AI and big data. The next 40 years will see the automation of much blue-collar work, and the encroachment of disruptive technologies into professional employment too. Our roads, homes and communities will be transformed. While the government's Autumn Budget made welcome moves on this terrain, the bigger discussions still tend to lapse into one of two stale tropes: "we are all doomed," or "everything will come out just fine," as new jobs replace the old.

I happen to be optimistic about our long-term opportunities. But we must think through any changes. Conservative thinkers can't duck the reality that some change is going to be painful: difficulties will arise, and established patterns of life be unsettled. The groundwork must be prepared so that we can cope. Otherwise, when the robots start coming for middle-class jobs, hell will never have seen so much fury. The window to allow us to manage this properly is rapidly closing.

Yet another discussion that we aren't having in conservative circles concerns power. The influence of government is being challenged like never before. States are left posturing in the face of growing cross-border activity; and international institutions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such as the EU are so scared of taking action that they seem content to settle for irrelevance. Trials of the tech giants by select or senate committees may provide compelling viewing, but an effective regulatory approach it is not.

Despite all the angst about Cambridge Analytica, we still lack a framework for managing the privacy and data implications of technology companies. The answer should not be extensive state regulation, but we at least need to decide. We live in a world where data is king and Google mouths platitudes like "don't be evil." Quite simply: who is in power today? If national leaders aren't managing the big issues, then who is sovereign?

Growth is another thorny question. Richard Heinberg recently talked of growth as "the *sine qua non* of economic existence," but I have always been bemused by the west's refusal to properly debate how much of it is possible—or even desirable. Long-term growth is the hidden actor in almost all our debates—immigration, housing and infrastructure to name but a few. As a Conservative I am naturally all for harnessing economic development to secure a rising tide of prosperity. Yet democracies need to debate these trade-offs.

And—as average growth slows in the west—they also need to think through what happens when there is less bounty to go around. Shortly before his election in 2016, Donald Trump committed to another dash for expansion, boisterously declaring a 4 per cent "national goal." He conveniently omitted the reality that it has been nearly two decades since the US last achieved that, and even the debt-busting tax cuts of last winter haven't hit the target. Wouldn't it be helpful, then, to discuss the implications of persistently slower growth? And even though it is hopefully many generations away we might also start a discussion about what happens when growth ends. A zero-sum economics scenario would send an entire system based on the notion of perpetual progress into chaos.

Western democracies give too little thought to these sorts of questions. All require a vision; though the political rewards for developing one are uncertain. Yet, despite the pitfalls, and the temptation to concentrate on the here and now, all of us in public life—and especially, perhaps, those of us whose party is committed to conserve the best of the old in new times—have a duty to take the long view.

So, at the risk of my Conservative colleagues recoiling in horror, let's hear it for some Royal Commissions, some Ministries for the Future and expert panels. Talking shops they might be, but at least they might generate a national conversation about our long-term future. It's good to talk—and opportunities will abound if we can grab them early enough.

Lee Rowley is Conservative MP for North East Derbyshire

Thinking big:
3 ideas to save the Conservatives

A property-owning democracy (again)

Every party pledges to "build more homes," and yet ever-fewer people can afford to buy. The thinking right knows this spells trouble: support for capitalism relies on people having a stake. That's why "property-owning democracy" has been a Tory phrase since the 1920s. But making a reality of it today might mean controversial changes to regulations, including the Green Belt, and perhaps backing private building with publicly borrowed funds. The numbers are, necessarily, big—a price tag in the tens of billions for a million new homes. But it would be popular. To win back the under-40s, who have deserted in droves, the party must make home-owning realistic again for those without wealthy parents.

Free money

The Universal Basic Income (UBI) might sound like a leftist dream, but if the Tories took a libertarian turn they could embrace it. Indeed, the idea of guaranteed cash transfers is building support on the right—the Adam Smith Institute is one backer, arguing that a UBI would "smooth the transition for workers displaced by automation." An early version of the policy was once supported in the US by President Nixon.

There is a catch, though. The introduction of a UBI would likely mean the end of a host of other benefits. Yet in an age of precarious work, a guaranteed income, however small, could have electoral appeal.

The commercial society

"Capitalism" is a 19th century invention. Its intellectual grandfather—Adam Smith—always wrote about "commercial society," a term that puts economics in its place. The roads minister Jesse Norman, author of a new biography of Smith, is convinced that to recover from a crisis that exposed crony capitalism, the centre-right needs to re-conceive the market—*à la* Smith—as something embedded in, and justified by, the community it serves. Politicians and regulators who grasp that could break free of *laissez-faire*, and take on bloated companies and sharp-elbowed employment or sales practices that embody that lack of moral regard which Smith feared would result in the strong dominating the weak. Sometimes intervention may be needed to ensure competition, Norman argues; but he still thinks this agenda is a conservative one, because it could restore lost faith in once-trusted political and social institutions.

Prospect staff

How to de-radicalise an extremist

Angry young men are the greatest security threat the world faces. Why are we so bad at dealing with them—and how could things change?

NABEELAH JAFFER

When I met Adam in early 2016, he told me that he wanted to join the "Muslim army." He had been watching videos of jihadists training and said that if he didn't find a job he might sign up. "If I go fight at least I have a life," he said. "What am I gonna do here?"

Adam had gained notoriety in 2015, when he went on the BBC2 *Victoria Derbyshire* programme. A young Polish convert to Islam, he appeared with his former mentor, Hanif Qadir, head of the Active Change Foundation (ACF), one of several organisations the government has used to de-radicalise suspected extremists. Qadir told the show that Adam was "on a path to terror," until he got involved. He said he had taught Adam that he was following the wrong kind of Islam. "We've pulled him back from the edge, let's say," claimed Qadir, in what was a broadcast-ready advertisement for the government's approach.

The ACF was employed by the government as part of its Channel programme. Channel is paired with the controversial Prevent strategy, which requires teachers, doctors and social workers to report anyone showing signs of radicalisation. But while Prevent casts a wide speculative net, Channel is supposed to stop genuinely threatening individuals from wanting to commit violence in the first place. This is crucial: time and again the perpetrators of terrorist attacks are later found to have been on such watch-lists. Channel's task is to intervene before it's too late.

The government is confident it's on the right track. Sajid Javid, the new Home Secretary, published a report in June that reaffirmed his commitment to providing "theological and ideological advice" to anyone drawn to terrorism—a form of faith-based reprogramming Qadir specialised in at the ACF, designed to challenge what Theresa May calls "non-violent extremism." No one doubts it's a serious problem: last year, the UK suffered four terrorist attacks, three jihadist and one far-right, which between them killed dozens. A proper de-radicalisation programme could make a real difference. But as I discovered over a year with Adam and Qadir, the BBC show didn't tell the full story.

In person, Adam was difficult to dislike. He gelled his hair into spikes, as though he were in a 1990s boy band, and beamed at the slightest praise. He often asserted that he was "smart." But even after going through the ACF's programme, he still had the makings of a violent extremist. "You're not scared of me, are you?" he often asked me. Rather than a textbook success, as Qadir claimed, Adam's story is of a flawed approach to de-radicalisation, which often does much more harm than good.

Adam had converted to Islam when he first came to the UK from Poland aged 19 to work in construction. For him revelation bordered on hallucination. At a party, he blacked out after his drink was spiked with methadone and dreamt a Muslim man was helping him up. Adam's Muslim workmates gave him some books. "I was young, I wanna try new things," Adam recalled. So he tried Islam. He found it helpful to be part of a community—there was usually someone at a mosque who could give him a bed for a few nights.

He went to Paris in 2014, where in a mosque he met some Tunisians with militant sympathies. They showed him jihadist videos of "training" and "fighting" in Syria. He stayed with them for a few months but struggled to find work and returned to London. The videos were still on his mind when, after falling on hard times, he met someone who said he wanted to help: Hanif Qadir, of the ACF.

Based in Waltham Forest, a relatively poor borough in northwest London, the ACF's youth centre is filled with sofas, pool tables and an enormous television; the walls are graffitied with words like "patience" and "peace." Qadir's nephews run the gym upstairs. Copies of the ACF magazine are prominently displayed; their headlines range from "How much ya benching?" to "10 Points Refuting ISIS." The ACF became well known in 2014 when Barack Obama praised an anti-Islamic State Twitter campaign—#NotInMyName—started by Qadir's daughter, who also works at the organisation.

Qadir relishes his work. His glasses and salt-and-pepper beard are suggestive of a mosque uncle—but he also has a dash of Alan Partridge. His anecdotes take the form of sermonising tales in which he is ultimately proven right. He told the Home Office there would be an uprising in Syria in 2011. "People were laughing at me," he said. Not any more, his expression implied.

The ACF began receiving government funding in 2007, and in 2015 May visited as Home Secretary. The ACF was soon lauded in a Downing Street press release. It became, said Qadir, "the showpiece for the government."

Qadir first encountered Adam in August 2014 as a simple charity case. After a few days, Adam was put on a construction

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREW LYONS

job, but when Qadir discovered that he had been sleeping at the building site, he said he could temporarily stay in the prayer room next to the family gym.

Adam caught the attention of the ACF's counter-extremism effort when he was heard praising the 2015 attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, which killed 12 people. Qadir was worried: "I said, this guy—if he's not careful he won't end up in prison, he'll end up in Guantanamo Bay." But Adam was firm in his views.

Qadir offered Adam a deal. Adam had to delete the jihadist videos from his phone and, more importantly, he had to "go through the process of understanding Islam a lot better." Qadir would become his religious instructor, teaching him the good, peaceful Islam that he—and the government—believed was the answer to his problems. In exchange, Qadir would find Adam proper housing and work. He would even get him circumcised—on Adam's persistent request. "I'll help you," Qadir promised.

Qadir referred Adam to the local Channel panel. Each panel includes representatives from the police, local government and social services. The panel agreed that Qadir should spend time with Adam, trying to correct his religious ideology. He would stay in the prayer room while the local authority searched for permanent housing and helped with job training.

For Qadir, faith is paramount in de-radicalisation—a process in which he was the active subject, and his mentees were the passive object. De-radicalisation was something he was doing *to* them. And Qadir's methods are government-blessed. The official line is that radicalisation occurs when vulnerable people come into contact with an infectious extremist ideology. De-radicalisation is the same process—but with a different ideology. Those succumbing to the extremist infection are inoculated with "true Islam" before any harm can be done.

"I said to this guy—if he isn't careful, he won't end up in prison, he'll end up in Guantanamo Bay"

Qadir is dedicated to the faith-based approach even though his own past flirtation with violence wasn't ended by a religious change of heart. During the US invasion of Afghanistan in the early 2000s, he got involved with a group who told stories of noble martyrs fighting the US. In December 2002, he made his way to a camp run by Mullah Omar, the one-eyed Taliban leader. But he was quickly disillusioned when he saw children being groomed for suicide bombings, and left after a week.

By Qadir's own account it was disillusionment—not combative religious counselling—that saved him. Yet he grew frustrated as Adam failed to respond to his faith-based approach. He was baffled by Adam's patchy religiosity—he didn't join Friday prayers or fast in Ramadan. But Adam was uninterested in the parts of the faith that did not give a pious frame for his emotionally-charged opinions.

Adam was becoming an uncomfortable presence at the ACF. No housing materialised from the local authority, and no one on the Channel panel ever asked whether it was appropriate to house an extremist in a gym privately owned by their official de-radicalisation provider. Qadir began to resent Adam's constant requests for money. Tensions rose after the BBC interview, which Adam claims Qadir forced him into. (On the other hand, Qadir claims

Adam badgered him to go on television.) Things came to a head in August 2015 after Qadir's nephews said they had caught Adam masturbating in the prayer room. Qadir finally snapped. "Get your stuff and get out now!"

Adam's account of his time at the ACF differs in crucial details. He says that the £10 per day he received was not charity but in exchange for odd jobs. The ACF says it encouraged Adam to be enterprising. But Adam allegedly took to urinating on the bathroom floor and then requesting money to clean it up. Qadir acknowledges that his nephews did give Adam a cleaning job for five hours a day, for which he was paid "about £200 or £300 every month," which on either account works out less than the minimum wage.

"Jama began to feel that his individual troubles were part of an eternal struggle between white Danes and non-white Muslims"

Both Qadir and Adam were dishonest at times. What is clear is that Qadir's de-radicalisation did Adam little good and possibly made things worse. When I met Adam, he still had the same troubling extremist views he had declared to Qadir two years earlier. He told me that he still thought the *Charlie Hebdo* attack had been justified. I offered a few words on the history of figurative art in Islamic traditions. Adam brushed this aside. He wasn't interested in religious history—only in seizing on ideas that helped give his anger political expression.

Whenever he reached for religion, politics was bubbling under the surface: "this life cannot hold you too much, even if you have everything, because it is temporary life innit? The people who drive Ferrari they fucked, you know what I mean?" I'd heard similar sentiments while interviewing girls who supported IS. Adam was upset at his lack of money, stability and respect. He was tempted by utopian promises of a better life and black-and-white narratives that framed him as a victim and, potentially, a martyr. He was searching for something to give voice to his anger, and found jihadism. He isn't alone: less than 4 per cent of UK Muslims are converts, but they make up 12 per cent of domestic jihadis.

Ideologies, religious or not, are like plants that need the right soil to flourish. Weeding them out is only a short-term fix. In Adam's case a violent religious ideology took root in his mind *because* of its extremism—and the promise of belonging and redemption it offered. Islam for its own sake did not hold his attention—and so the peaceful interpretations Qadir offered held no appeal. The path away from violence didn't lie in "correcting" his religious views. He needed someone to pay attention to his everyday problems.

John Horgan is a psychologist at Georgia State University who has spent decades interviewing former terrorists. He points out that there is no conclusive evidence that "ideological training" can make a reliable difference to de-radicalisation. After all, the paths to becoming a terrorist are diverse. Personal ties often play a stronger role than ideology: the three girls from Bethnal Green who joined IS in early 2015 were following a schoolfriend who had left a few months earlier.

Horgan's argument is backed up by other significant voices. Monica Lloyd is a former principal psychologist at the National Offender Management Service, who worked with convicted terrorists in the years after 7/7. "The danger now," says Lloyd, "with the government shifting to focus on the presence of extremist beliefs, is that… you could end up intervening in a way which actually provokes radicalisation rather than counters it."

Lloyd says her work focused not on ideology but on urging terrorists to take responsibility for their choices. She notes that many are motivated by a sense of injustice. It was this sort of anger that spurred Qadir to Afghanistan in 2002. Lloyd encouraged terrorists to see how their actions undermined their own values.

Adam himself is an example of how a change in circumstances can also change someone's mind. Over the course of a year, our conversations shifted in tone. He found permanent housing in late 2016, and then a job over Christmas. He had stable work and a place to live. He left Islam and formulated plans for the future—some far-fetched but some sensible. He has gradually stopped asking whether I am scared of him.

As for Qadir, he no longer works for the government. His gender-segregated counter-extremism events received critical press coverage and the Home Office were not pleased. "They said to me: 'At this point in time Mrs May doesn't need any negative attention.'" Qadir's religious approach had become too conservative for government-backed Islam.

Our clumsy approaches to de-radicalisation are plainly not working. Which leaves us with one question: how can we get it right?

Jama was 21 years old when he told his classmates they deserved to be stoned. He was in a religious studies class at his college in Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest city. Jama comes from a Somali family, and was one of the few non-white students in the class. Islam was on the agenda that week. Several students began trash-talking: "your religion is violent, it's not human. You stone people, your religion is barbaric."

Jama, a gangly teenager with cropped black hair, had never been good at biting his tongue: "You're talking about stoning?" he shot back. "You deserve it. Your country is bombing our countries. That is barbaric." The next day the police visited his home. His classmates were worried he might be planning something dangerous and had reported him to the principal, who called the authorities. They also said he had bullied a classmate into wearing a headscarf. Jama denied this, but the allegation was taken as a troubling sign by police, who also noted he had recently gone on Hajj. Was he "ready to fight"? Jama panicked. "Oh shit," he thought, "I'm going to Guantanamo now."

The police went through his clothes, bedding and electronics. It was humiliating, but Jama was learning

to stay silent. The police told him they might decide to press charges. He was too upset to attend college, and struggled to study for his exams. His mother was unwell and he stayed at home with her, brooding.

When the call came it was good news: he was no longer a suspect. But he had missed his exams—and wasn't allowed to retake them. A few days later, his mother died of a heart attack. "I was actually so angry," Jama told me, "that I just wanted to die with her." In a few short weeks, his life had dissolved.

Jama's personal loss and his encounters with bigoted classmates were part of the soil in which an extreme ideology was able to take root. He began to feel that his individual troubles were part of a wider story: an eternal struggle between white Danes and non-white Muslims.

A few days after his mother died, Jama bumped into an old friend, also of Somali origins. Yusuf invited him to a flat where he and three Arab men held regular meetings. They listened sympathetically to Jama's story and told him they felt "exactly the same way as you do." Jama wondered if the group could be the "firm ground I needed."

Some in the group were religiously conservative and others more liberal. But all disliked western democracy. "We believed that democracy was good for the white male elite but not good for the poor person and the Muslim, because we were treated badly," Jama explained. The group's religious ideology was shaped by their political anger. They watched videos of Anwar al-Awlaki, a Yemeni-American ideologue popular among IS supporters. One video spoke to Jama "like a prophecy": Awlaki cautioned his viewers that "the west will turn on the Muslims living in the west, therefore you must go to Muslim countries and defend them."

"You can believe in extreme narratives of white decline or a western conspiracy against Muslims without being tempted to violence. A vote for Trump might suffice"

Extremism expert Daniel Koehler describes radicalisation as a process of ideological "de-pluralisation"—a single narrative establishing a monopoly. This narrative need not be complex. "Many people tend to misunderstand 'ideology' as 'theology' or as an intellectual system of thought. That's rarely the case." All problems are reduced to one problem. For a white extremist that problem might be immigration; for a jihadist, Muslim suffering in Syria.

Still, radicalisation does not necessarily lead to violence. A person might choose to become a vegan after undergoing much the same process. Alternative animal welfare ideas are crowded out. Alternative solutions seem inadequate, prompting the individual to take action on their diet. Only at the absolute fringes of the animal rights movement, however, does violence become an option. Similarly, it is possible to believe strongly in extreme narratives of white decline or of a western conspiracy against Muslims without being tempted to violence. A vote for Ukip or Trump might let off sufficient steam for a white nationalist, as might emigration to a Muslim country for an Islamist.

With someone like Jama, the touchpaper question is whether they still feel non-violent solutions are viable. He sympathised ▶

with al-Awlaki's ideas, but still felt a non-violent solution was best: to leave Denmark for Pakistan.

There is no way of knowing for certain which angry young person is going to commit violence: the vast majority will not. And wrongly accusing those who are innocent—as in Jama's case—will often only make things worse.

But Jama was luckier than Adam. He was taken on by a counter-extremism programme with a very different philosophy to the UK's. "The Aarhus model" is partly the work of Natascha Mannemar Jensen, Head of Social Services in the city. Jensen echoes de-radicalisation expert Daniel Koehler's ideas. "We encourage people to have strong political minds, strong religious minds," she said. "The problem is when they want to use violence to solve a problem." Jensen says their focus is on preventing violent acts—not extremist thoughts.

The Aarhus programme is built on a partnership between the city's social services and police. For decades, the two have worked together to deal with troubled families and young people. They decide how to reach out to those they encounter by offering a mentor, or counselling, or help with housing. The programme's first volunteer mentor was a lawyer named Hussein—and Jama became his first mentee.

Jama agreed to take part in the programme out of fear that he would get into more trouble if he didn't. The first time he met Hussein, Jama insisted on searching him "for hidden microphones, hidden cameras." Hussein waited patiently as Jama patted him down. He understood his wariness: "Why should he trust me?" Hussein asked himself.

Hussein, a middle-class professional in his thirties, had an ability Jama lacked—he knew how to approach people who didn't want to listen to him. "He wasn't aggressive, you know," Jama remembers. "He was cool. He was kind. He didn't give up—always called me, picked me up from my home to hang out with me." Hussein had an air of quiet confidence that made him easy to confide in. Most of the time he and Jama just ate and talked. Three months passed like this. Hussein allowed Jama to guide their conversations without pushing his own views. Hussein described these months as the "trust period." The approach is common, according to other Aarhus mentors I interviewed.

As Jama became comfortable, he began to talk about why he disliked Danish democracy. "He didn't talk about halal food or praying," says Hussein—but he used religious ideas and rhetoric to make sense of his struggle to belong. Jama presented Hussein with the idea that Islam was incompatible with Danish democracy and society—as a way of describing his feeling that *he* had no place in Denmark. "The only reason people reject a society is if the society is not working for them like it is working for other people," Jama told me. In return, Hussein tried to empathise. He did not deny Jama's feelings, or belittle his religious ideas.

Hussein agreed that his mentee was not wrong to feel marginalised. But he tried to present Jama with alternative ways of viewing his difficulties. The challenge of being a practising Muslim in Denmark, Hussein suggested, was part of its appeal. "When you are in the west things are harder—you don't hear the call to prayer, you have to remember by yourself. That's more valuable to Allah." It was the same when it came to social marginalisation, Hussein argued. Jama had a responsibility to show the world there is a place for Muslims in Denmark.

Hussein talked about religion with Jama; but he didn't try to correct his religious beliefs. Instead, he focused on the sense of alienation underpinning Jama's religious convictions. When Jama said he could not picture himself finishing his education or finding a good job in Denmark, Hussein assisted him with his studies, helped him to plan his career and find work.

> **"After several years of support from his mentor, Jama was finally able to envision a successful future in Denmark"**

Six months after they had first met, Jama cut off contact with the angry young men who wanted to leave for Pakistan. Two years on, he found work as a financial controller for the local municipality. Hussein was there when Jama got married. Only then—after several years of support—was Jama finally able to envision a successful future in Denmark.

The mentors are trained by a professor of psychology at the University of Aarhus, Preben Bertelsen. The training provides a loose structure from which the mentors can improvise. One mentor told me that it was important to focus on positive aspirations. The idea is to encourage the mentees to set goals and help them fulfil them. The result, ideally, is a young person who feels like there is a valuable place for him or her in Danish society.

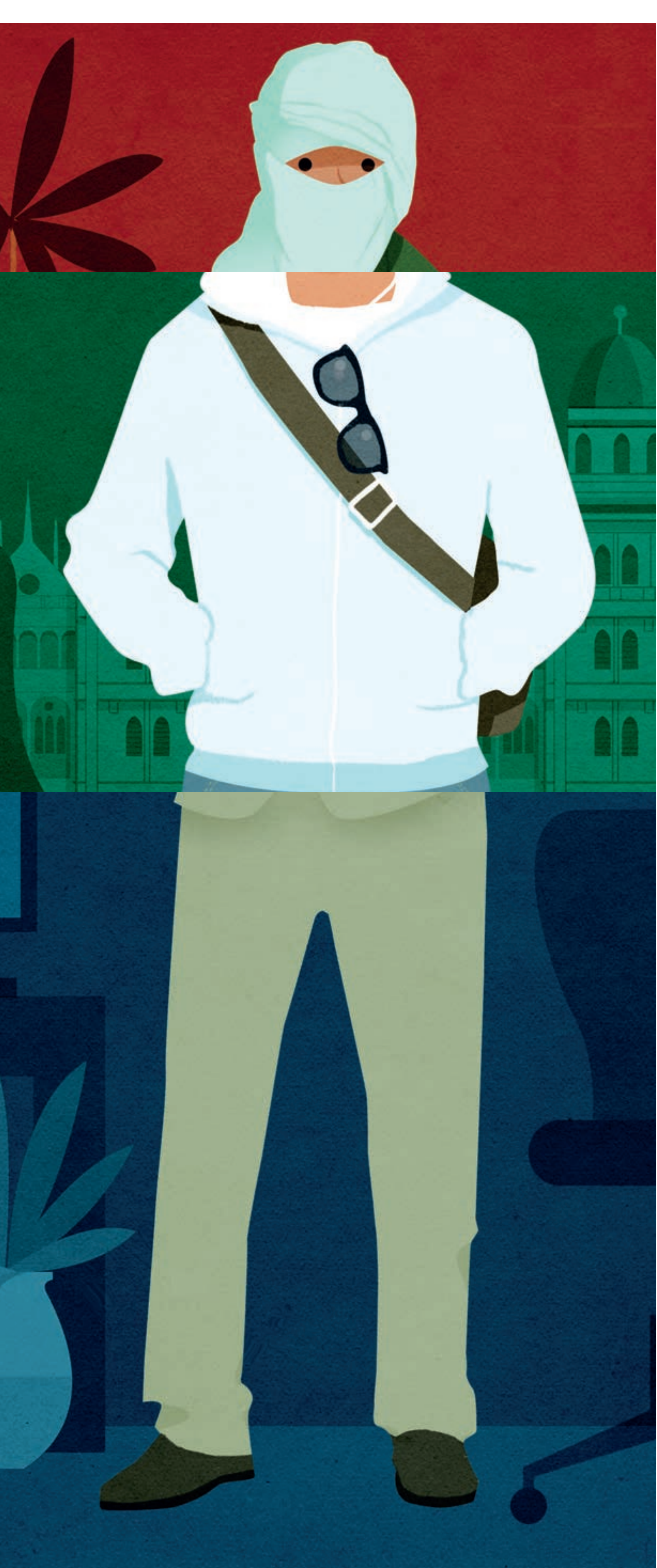
It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of such programmes. It is, for example, impossible to know whether Jama would have engaged in violence without Hussein's help—although three of the men from his group he hung out with at the flat did eventually travel to Syria to defend, in their minds, Muslims under attack from Bashar al-Assad.

But we can extract a few lessons. Every single psychologist and practitioner I spoke to argued that each case needs to be dealt with on its own terms. Adam's unstable personal life and financial difficulties stoked his anger; but in Jama's case racism played a bigger role. The other key lesson is that programmes that are well built—with well-trained staff, good resources and strong oversight—have a better chance of making a difference. Long-term programmes are more effective as building trust takes time.

The small-scale Aarhus model has the kind of flexibility and professionalism that is lacking in the UK's Channel programme. Jama certainly thinks it has changed his life for the better. "I'm happy today that I left that group," he says. "I'm grateful for what Hussein did for me."

Jama was drawn to extreme ideas in part because of "problems with assimilation, integration, identity," as Hussein put it. Jensen agrees that feelings of ethnic-minority marginalisation often play a part. This is not the same thing as poor integration. "A lot of the people we deal with… go to school or university, speak fluent Danish, are involved in Danish culture. But then, when we talk to them, they have this feeling of being excluded."

A great deal of Hussein's time with Jama was spent coaching him in diplomatic ways to deal calmly with anti-Muslim prejudice or racism. "I say: 'I have been here for 20 years. I live here, I work here. Please. You can't piss me off.'" He has learned to take responsibility for other people's reactions towards him. "I need to… show them that Muslims—coloured people—can have a nice life too."



Hussein explains that rejecting a sense of victimhood is what has enabled him to thrive in Danish society. And his approach has done plenty for Jama. But I wonder whether it was fair to put all the onus on Jama to change. No doubt from the bureaucrat's desk that looks like the easier solution, in comparison with asking the dominant majority to change their attitudes to minorities. But it means the political problem of discrimination is being reframed as a personal problem—of individual kids from disadvantaged communities who just need to learn to take a deep breath and count to 10.

I asked Hussein about the kids who had turned on Jama at school. Had the programme worked with them? Hussein shook his head. "You cannot come to another country and say: 'this is how I want it to be, we are equal now.' You have to struggle." I pointed out to Hussein that Jama had been raised in Denmark, just as I had been raised in Britain. Why shouldn't we feel entitled to equal respect? "That's because you think that you already are part of these countries," Hussein said. "Your parents and grandparents who came here did their best but their limit was to get a salary, come home with food. We have to get one step higher."

Part of the problem with Jama was that he expected to belong in Denmark in the same way his white peers did. He was well integrated, spoke the language and wore the garb of his home comfortably. The problem was not that he did not belong enough—but that he assumed he belonged already. Like many other young extremists, he did not initially recognise himself as an alien in the west—rather he expected to find respect, equality and acceptance without having to struggle for it, or to prove himself to be as worthy of it as native Danes.

Only by teaching his mentees to feel a little *less* like they belonged in Denmark, could Hussein teach Jama to act as an "ambassador" to those who looked down on him. Jama's sense of already belonging needed to be unpicked.

Hussein was right. One reason why IS was so effective in luring young westerners was that its propaganda made the same point—Muslims are not entirely welcome in the west, and do not entirely belong. Jama described how liberal affirmations of equality only frustrated him more. "Every time we turned on the television it confirmed the hypocrisy, you know: 'we are against racists—but we hate Muslims.'" (Denmark has recently legislated to ban face veils, and its immigration minister claimed Muslims shouldn't work during Ramadan, as fasting made them "a danger to all of us.") Hussein didn't deny Jama faced problems, but tried to teach him how to cope with them.

Even the best programmes, such as the Aarhus model, can only do so much by weeding out dangerous individuals on a case-by-case basis. While the UK would be well advised to draw some lessons from Denmark to correct its own dysfunctional programmes, this isn't enough. Until we look at the deeper causes of alienation, cases such as Adam's and Jama's will keep coming up. This will involve the difficult task of appraising how our society has allowed some of its citizens to get so far off track. Javid's report speaks of the problem of "isolated communities." But most of those drawn to extremism have been well integrated into mainstream society; yet their sense of exclusion persists and they find ready-made answers in extremism.

For as long as the soil remains the same, it will continue to produce more weeds until something fundamental changes, deep down in the earth.

Nabeelah Jaffer is a PhD student at Oxford University, specialising in jihadism and migration. Some names have been changed

England's towns were once as mighty as its cities. Now, they have fallen on hard times. Can Bury lead the revival? asks Philip Collins

Make Bury *great* again!

A statue of Sir Robert Peel, erected in the 19th century at the height of Bury's economic power

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Britain was once full of glorious towns—regency spas, industrial workshops, market squares, council chambers, grand town halls looked down upon by statues of local dignitaries. This was the very fabric of the nation of England, in particular. It is an intriguing parlour game to take a description like the one that follows, from Mark Girouard's *The English Town: A History Of Urban Life*, and wonder to which place it applies:

> *"For a mile or so we drove along a street of palaces—palaces… amazing in the height and power of their mighty stone façades, piled up storey after storey, and row after row of windows. I have never been to Florence, but this, it seemed to me, must be what Florence is like."*

Answer—it's Huddersfield. For that, town though it is, was his "glorious city" of palaces and façades of high windows. Some of the buildings on the streets leading out from its St George's Square are indeed splendid, but *The English Town* was a deeply nostalgic tour of such places even when it was published in 1990. After the passage of a further quarter-century—a quarter century that has, in sequence, seen suburbanisation, out-of-town shopping centres, a financial crash and then internet shopping going mainstream—it sounds like a relic from a lost golden age.

The last generation has witnessed a remarkable story of progress in the big cities. Immigration has brought a new energy and diversity—new businesses, foods and fashions. Universities have expanded out of all recognition, bringing a young population that needs to walk, rather than drive, into their centres. Train travel, which had been dying, has become vastly more popular, laptops and then smartphones enabling people to work on the move on their way into the heart of a metropolis. The fashion is increasingly to live in the city, perhaps in one of the endless canal-side

former factory conversions where one can hope to meet, work with and date other like-minded sorts.

The cities, then, have undergone a renaissance. Not so the medium-sized settlements in the Huddersfield mould, including the place where I was raised—Bury, so close to Manchester, and yet so vigorously separate from it. How then can the Huddersfields and Burys replicate the successes of the Manchesters? To answer that we first need to understand how and why the paths of towns and cities have diverged so dramatically.

In the 1800s, as the Industrial Revolution took hold, the town of Bury and the city of Manchester could both lay claim to prosperity and success. In the 1900s, they would also know hard times together. The decline of the old industrial base had set in by the turn of the 20th century and things got worse—much worse—during the 1920s and 30s. With the help of a lot of economy-wide and industry-specific intervention, the urban rot was arrested for a time in the 1950s and 60s. But by the 1970s, things were coming unstuck again, and the long descent hit rock bottom during the 1980s.

A whole culture and community was dismantled with the collapse of heavy manufacturing—and the collapse was, if anything, now most marked in the big cities than anywhere else. Over long post-war decades, great cities like Liverpool were continually shedding population; right through the 1960s and into the 1980s, even London itself was hollowing out, losing population to the commuter new towns and small towns that were then seen as the future. Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield, Newcastle and Birmingham were all left in a poor state. Badly led—in the case of Liverpool under the Militant tendency, ultimately catastrophically led—and struggling to find an economic rationale, the shadows were falling on British cities. The phrase "inner cities" became a euphemism for poverty, crime and racial tension.

In the later part of this period, as a boy growing up in Bury, the city of Manchester was the first that I explored alone. There is something incredibly invigorating about the city in which you learned how to navigate. I looked on it with wonder, even though it was a poor and forbidding place whose tone was one of defiance. It seemed a place whose great days were in its past.

In more recent years, though, you don't need to be a youngster in awe of his first metropolis in order to marvel. Cities have been growing younger and more vibrant, while the towns have aged. The last four years in particular have brought the political division between nostalgic towns and "progressive" cities into stark relief. In 2015, Ed Miliband's Labour advanced in London and other conurbations, but faltered in small-town England, losing seats in places where Ukip soared. In 2016, the referendum reinforced the schism: Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and most especially London voted to "Remain" while the patchwork of smaller settlements swung the country for "Leave" (Manchester was 60 per cent "Remain," Bury 54 per cent "Leave").

In 2017, the Labour surge in the cities was such that even true-blue Kensington fell, while the Conservatives were actually able to take Labour Mansfield. Then, just this spring, we saw Labour make yet more strides across the capital—piling on councillors, if not whole councils, as the Conservatives lost Trafford on the affluent edges of Manchester. But places in the small-town Midlands, such as Dudley, swung the other way.

Provincial high streets lined with charity and pound shops don't help and they make for an increasing contrast with the pop-ups and glitzy chains of the city centres. When it comes to house prices, the cities have once again cleaned up. Between 2006 and 2017, property values in London doubled. In the same period, the average house price in Bury crept up by under 2 per cent on average annually, the total rise from £145,000 to £170,000 representing a drop in real terms. For those with a stake in property in prosperous cities, that bred faith in the outward-looking economic order that has rewarded them, and that included the EU. London's burgeoning renters, of course, had a different experience, but perhaps even they had the faith that if they could stick around and somehow get a foot on the ladder, they might one day get a share in those streets that were paved with gold. But people in the towns didn't share those rewards—or that outlook. They don't feel, as many city-dwellers do, that they've got any sort of stake in a more prosperous future.

> "Cities have been growing younger and more vibrant, while the towns have aged"

After a long absence, I have been spending more time in Bury lately, at the invitation of Rishi Shori, leader of Bury council, as chair of a commission into the life chances of the town's people. On my way to Bury I pass through Manchester, a much-changed place. Gone is the forbidding city, replaced by a lighter, more prosperous European conurbation, in which work is plentiful and play is good business. Inventive statecraft has helped, under the guidance of Richard Leese, leader of the city council, and, until recently, Howard Bernstein, chief executive. Business investment and innovative design such as Daniel Libeskind's Imperial War Museum North have also lifted Manchester. Between 2001 and 2011 the population increased by 20 per cent. The equivalent number for Leeds was 5 per cent.

The renaissance is visible everywhere not only in these three cities, but also Liverpool, Newcastle, Sheffield, Birmingham, Glasgow and Edinburgh. What you notice, though, as you leave Victoria Station in central Manchester is that the benefits do not stretch far. I travel through a familiar scene: Cheetham Hill, Crumpsall, Heaton Park, Prestwich, Besses o' the Barn, Whitefield, Radcliffe. I am surprised nobody has ever written a Manchester to Bury tram version of *Route 66* and even more surprised that Mark E Smith, our resident celebrity when I was young, never got around to writing it.

Manchester's recent regeneration has not trickled across to Bury. Even so, my home town is by no means a problem place—it is in better shape than other northern towns like Blackpool or Barnsley, which don't have the same proximity to any humming metropolis. Bury has undergone an economic transformation of a sort. But its manufacturing employment has fallen by 41 per cent since 2005, a far higher drop than the national average and it is now a service-sector town. To a dismaying extent the service industry is dependent on public spending—and therefore government whim. A fifth of the workforce is in health and social work; almost as many, it is true, are in wholesale and retail, but work there has often stopped paying. In Bury, real median hourly pay has fallen by 80p per hour (7 per cent) since 2008. As the number of hours worked has also fallen, annual real pay has fallen by even more: £2,700 a year (10 per cent). There ▶

are parts of Bury—Radcliffe, Moorside and East wards—that are among the most deprived in the country.

But there are upmarket wards too and the combination of the really dreadful with the lovely means that Bury is an average sort of town. The headline numbers for education are roughly in line with the national average, yet too many children are turning up for their first day at school not ready to learn. A significant minority of pupils get through 11 years of compulsory schooling with nothing to show for it. The most radical initiatives in school reforms—think of the early academies—have generally been aimed at the inner cities more than the towns; and the reforms of schools and universities have done far more for the sorts of people who will leave the towns, people like Robert Peel and me, and not much of it has benefited the people who will stay. Back in Bury, aspirations for many children are low and their horizons too narrow. This is in part a problem of poverty and the lack of high-quality work, but it is also psychological.

Struggling parents in Bury need practical help, and its young people need better mentoring and careers advice. It needs a different type of educational provision: less academic, more technical—the whole country would benefit from that. The pressing question is therefore not how Manchester can be even better, but how Bury can create its own success.

The problem of state-led regeneration goes deeper than austerity, although the savaging of local government budgets hasn't helped. Unlike NHS budgets or pensions, local spending was not protected. There is also a paradox here contained in the figure of George Osborne. From 2010 on, he slashed local authority budgets, but his later Northern Powerhouse reforms, and the establishment of city mayors, has promised new powers to the locality from the most centralised of developed states. But there is a danger the new metro-mayors will hand all influence to the big cities, at the expense of outlying towns.

Besides, local powers are only useful if they are used properly. Time and again while gathering evidence for the Bury Life Chances Commission, we found a hole where there should be an effective national policy, especially in respect of infrastructure and skills. The towns of Britain will not be revived without fixing this, and cash-strapped local government can't do that alone—even if it is revivified with new powers. It is only at the national level that the power exists to lay rapid train lines, site airports or build trunk roads.

Public resources are inevitably part of a more promising regeneration story—but they cannot be the end of it. This might not seem an auspicious field or moment for the intervention of large corporations, but imaginative work between the public and private sector has to be another crucial element. At the absolute extreme end of the scale of regeneration, in Detroit, Michigan, JP Morgan Chase has been showing what can be done with deep commitment and deep pockets. It's a huge city and the collapse of its industries and population has been astounding, going back much further than the relative and more recent eclipse of England's smaller towns. But there are wider lessons about regeneration here—especially for Bury—which can, in a small way with the Commission, now hope to benefit from some of the same energy and focus.

Led by its CEO Jamie Dimon, JP Morgan has committed $150m to Detroit. But the key is that JP Morgan is not doing regeneration *to* Detroit. In partnership with the Mayor it is sponsoring voluntary and community organisations to lift the city. Their efforts are concentrated on property development, small business generation and training. The representatives of the neighbourhoods themselves decide where the money goes.

Regeneration is, like community, one of those abstractions that is better approached from the side. It is not really a thing in itself but the upshot of other things. Until now, policies in this field have delivered physical results that have been imposed remotely, but which are not remotely wanted.

This raises the question of how to get schemes led by the people themselves. And here a different type of private-public co-operation—this time flowing the other way—comes to the fore. In straitened circumstances, local authorities would be well-advised to use their borrowing powers to invest in services (or businesses) that local people can run. The chances of devising sustainable services are considerably higher when the ▶

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Left: seating in the redeveloped courtyard of the Peace Hall in Halifax; right: White Lion statue in St George's Square, Huddersfield

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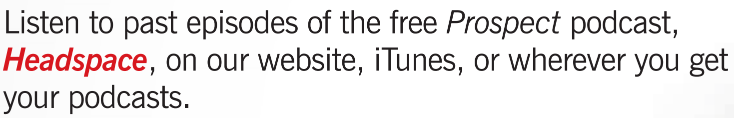
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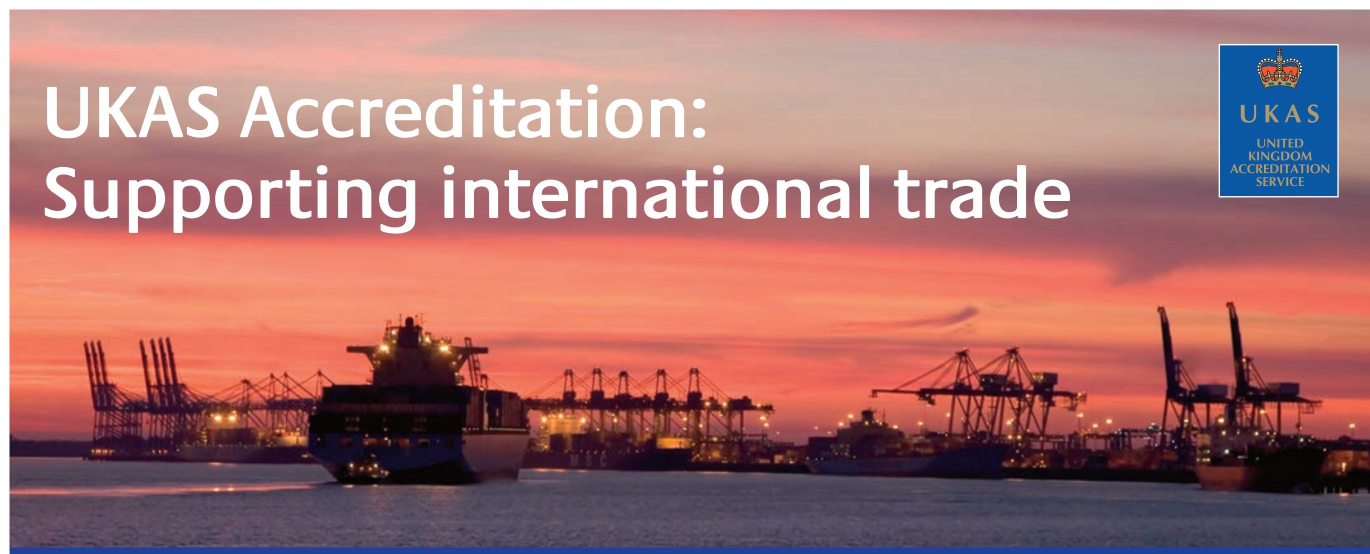

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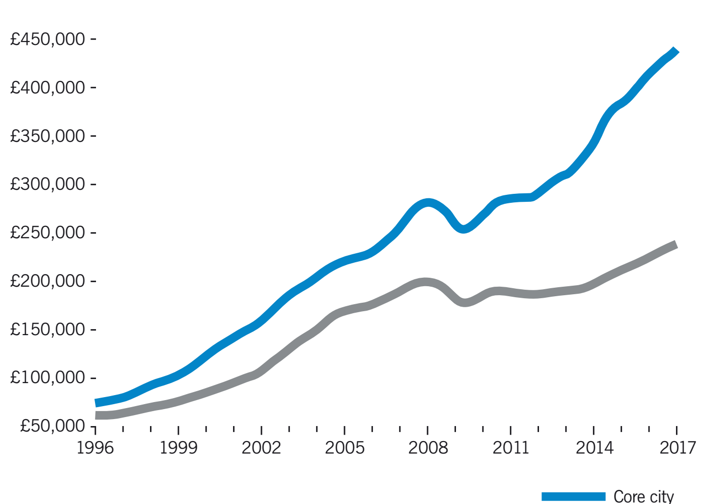
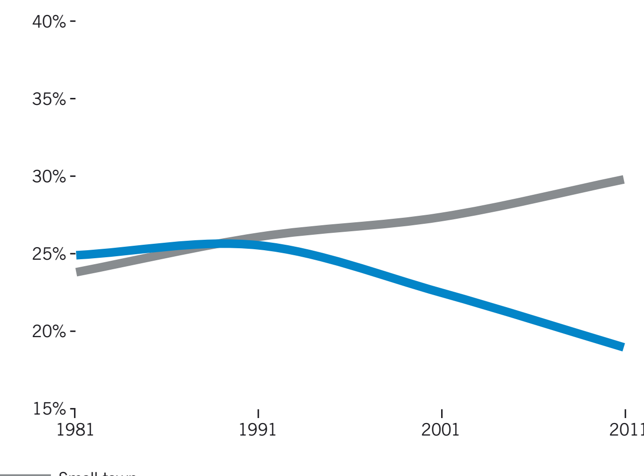
Cities vs towns: *buying a home and growing old*

Mean house prices



Ratio of over-65s to working-age population



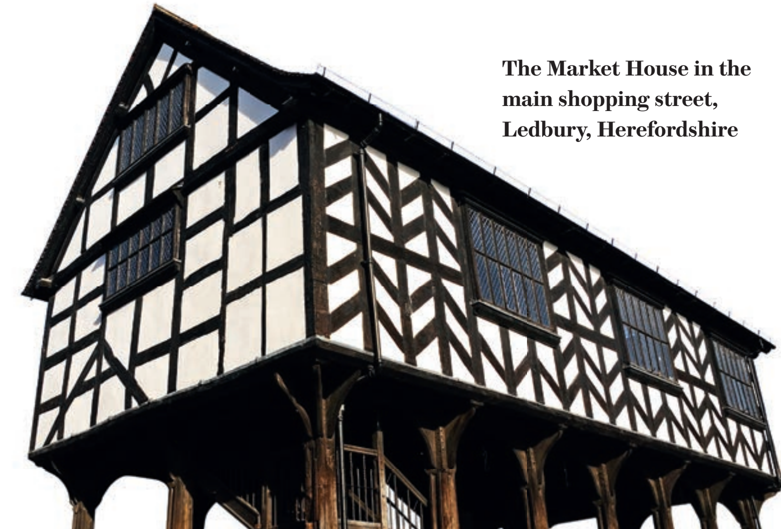
Core city Small town

SOURCE: CENTRE FOR TOWNS

public are in charge. An inventive local authority could, with the right powers, shift from being a provider in the traditional way to becoming a social investor.

Where the ordinary investor is looking for a yield, the public investor takes a return that is in part comprised of the public good that is achieved. The proposal could, if pursued with ambition, revive something of the co-operative movement, pioneered in John Bright's home town of Rochdale in the 1840s. (There is a very northern rival claim at Meltham Mills near Huddersfield, which claims to have beaten Rochdale to it).

There are many examples of such schemes already at work in Britain's towns, but there should be more—and on a bigger scale. The Dolphin Pub in Bishampton is now run by residents with a loan from their public authority. The Cheese and Grain, in Frome, is a music venue and a social enterprise. A former agricultural market hall, it now has a favourable lease with the town council, which also provides working capital that it takes from the Public Works Loan Board at very low interest rates. In the absence of banks showing much interest in small towns, Frome Council is, in effect, borrowing from central government and lending the money on. It is acting as a money broker, making something happen that it would struggle to provide. In a sense, the local authorities are performing the role once played by the local banks that have long-since been swallowed up by the giants of Canary Wharf—giants that have not for the most part been kind to England's small and medium-sized towns.



The Market House in the main shopping street, Ledbury, Herefordshire

> **"The problem of state-led regeneration goes deeper than austerity although, of course, the savaging of local budgets hasn't helped"**

Larger conurbations are also using this model. Portsmouth Council launched a £108m property fund in November 2015. It has invested £7.25m in a logistics warehouse in Yorkshire, £11.5m in a bed factory in the West Midlands and £16m in a retail park in Portsmouth. After costs, the portfolio has generated £4.3m profit for services which has benefited libraries, museums, weekly rubbish collections, community wardens, homelessness and school crossing patrols.

If David Cameron had ever given real meaning to the idea of the Big Society, schemes like this could have made up his agenda. Who knows, he might have survived the European Union referendum if he'd had the presence of mind to see it through. As things stand, time has run out on remote expertise, confidentiality and formal governance. This is the era of open participation, looser structures and popular power. The work on the Life Chances Commission is just starting but the glory is that there is more and more evidence that real good can be done. If it can make a practical difference in Bury it might, in time, show the way for other towns to recover themselves too. But if we can start to help Bury, then that will the best work that I ever do. P

Philip Collins is a leader writer for the Times and former chief speech writer for Tony Blair

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The real deal-maker

While others in the White House have fallen, **Mike Pompeo** has risen almost without trace. What has he got that the others haven't? *Sam Tanenhaus* investigates

The quiet tenacity of Mike Pompeo, Donald Trump's Secretary of State, was never so clear as during the dizzying reversals surrounding the US-North Korea summit. The historic meeting in Singapore on 12th June, which Trump claimed would yield a denuclearised North Korea, was announced by the US president in April. Then in May, Kim Jong Un granted "amnesty" to three Americans who had been detained in North Korea. Two weeks later, foreign journalists were invited to remote Punggye-ri, the country's only known nuclear test site, to observe the demolition of buildings and tunnels—a deafening spectacle, though possibly just a stunt.

Then, on the train back to Pyongyang, the journalists learned that Trump had sent Kim a letter calling the whole thing off. "The Singapore summit, for the good of both parties, but to the detriment of the world, will not take place," Trump wrote. "You talk about your nuclear capabilities, but ours are so massive and powerful that I pray to God they will never have to be used."

Pompeo had set up the summit in two secret meetings with Kim and also secured the release of the American prisoners. It seemed that he had lost out in an internal struggle with John Bolton, the hawkish new National Security Adviser with a long history of urging military strikes against North Korea. But then, a week after Trump cancelled the meeting, Pompeo dined in New York with a North Korean envoy, its former top spy, Kim Yong Chol. The next day the envoy was in the Oval Office with a letter for Trump. Pompeo was in the room—Bolton was not—and the summit was back on. In the event, it took place without a hitch.

It was a typical Pompeo victory, achieved so blandly as to go almost unnoticed. And this is the reason for his success. In a different White House and a different time, Ronald Reagan kept a plaque on his desk on which was inscribed, "There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he does not mind who gets the credit." It was a variation of a sentiment that Harry Truman also expressed. Under Trump, the calculations are different. The credit always goes to one man, the boss, and the rest try to grab whatever is left over. Yet in this unpromising environment, Pompeo has prospered. He is a subtly effective facilitator with a steady compass. With each new hurricane, he calmly adjusts and stays on course.

It is curious, then, that the foreign policy views that Pompeo expressed in speeches and chats with right-wing radio hosts before he entered government appear devoid of nuance or any sense of diplomatic awareness. They ranged instead from standard conservative cant to the stuff of paranoia: the attractions of waterboarding, the importance of keeping Guantanamo Bay open, the threat posed to the US by "sharia law."

Perhaps it is a case of conveniently strong views, weakly held. But is this the man we want in charge of US foreign

policy? One sobering answer is that the alternatives could well be much worse.

Less than two years ago, Pompeo was a middle-ranking Republican in the House of Representatives, part of the Tea Party intake elected in 2010 with no purpose other than to make life miserable for Barack Obama. But Trump likes him—and believes in him, at least to the extent he believes in anyone other than himself. He appointed Pompeo first to run the CIA and then the State Department, with its 74,000 diplomats and foreign service officers, two-thirds of them posted overseas.

Until the moment Trump put him in charge, Pompeo's only connection with the State Department and the art of diplomacy was that he had attacked them both. He was a member of the House Select Committee on Benghazi, a body that spent almost three years and upwards of $7m trying to prove that, as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton had caused the deaths of her own staff—four of whom were killed by terrorists at a Libyan consulate in September 2012.

Pompeo was one of the supposedly star interrogators during these committee hearings, and Clinton danced rings around him. While most of his colleagues got the message and issued an 800-page report in which they grudgingly cleared her of all charges, Pompeo instead drafted a 50-page supplement of "additional views," a farrago of warmed-over insinuations and outright falsehoods, whose net effect was to demoralise "diplomats on the front lines," as the journal *Foreign Policy* noted. This turned out to be the first step in a major dismantling of the State Department. Trump's first Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, an indifferent negotiator but zealous "reorg" man, left important jobs vacant, which led to an exodus of senior diplomats. "Thank you to Rex Tillerson for his service!" Trump tweeted when he sacked him via social media in March.

And so Pompeo, yesterday's wrecking ball of America's foreign service, was charged with putting the pieces back together again. The Senate confirmed his appointment as Secretary of State on 26th April. Forty minutes after his confirmation, he was at Andrews Air Force Base "boarding the plane to carry him to Brussels," the *Washington Post* reported, for the Nato meeting of foreign ministers. Even before the hapless Tillerson had received his fateful tweet, Pompeo was already rewriting policy under his nose with his secret Korean trips.

This might be funny in an *In the Loop* kind of way if the world were not so dark a place these days, somewhere between Weimar collapse and a new post-democratic age of militarised anarchy. There are many reasons to be gloomy about international relations: whether it is Russian agents smearing poison on a former spy's home in Salisbury; Bashar al-Assad murdering his own citizens in suburban Damascus; or North Korea test-launching ballistic missiles. In the past, western democracies looked to America for military and diplomatic leadership. No longer. The uneasy feeling, planted with Trump's victory and growing daily, is that he means to take America on its own course—the rest of the world be damned.

In this context, Pompeo's ascendancy matters. It also mystifies. Other political animals, some better known, better connected, with deeper and longer histories of service to Trump than Pompeo, have been cast aside. Yet Pompeo, who didn't even support Trump in the Republican primaries, glides ever-upward. Pure luck? In politics there's no such thing. The variables are too many, and the ground constantly shifts. And that's in normal times.

In the post-normal Trumpworld, there's an eruption every day, sometimes more than one. But none of it has touched Pompeo. Somehow, he is able to appeal to Trump's serious side, the tiny part of him that is aware of history and presidential legacy, without lecturing him or—crucially—ever seeming smarter than he is. As one close Pompeo-watcher, Curt Mills, a reporter at the *National Interest*, put it: "He's the most formidable person operating at a high political level in America." ▶

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Sign on the dotted line: Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un put pen to paper after discussion in Singapore

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Teamwork makes the dream work: Mike Pompeo fist bumps his aide after getting the second pick during an office selection lottery for new members of the House of Representatives in 2010

Keep your friends close…: Pompeo might act as a check on John Bolton, who had previously urged strikes againt North Korea and claimed the Iraq War was a success

Michael Richard Pompeo was raised in modest circumstances in southern California. During summer holidays he worked behind the counter at Baskin-Robbins, the ice cream franchise. During his testimony for his appointment as Secretary of State, he told the Senate committee, "I was employee of the month. Not once, but twice." The self-effacing joke carried a serious message: Pompeo learned early that the customer is always right. This is the art of "managing up," and he excels at it, always finding the biggest boss and serving him faithfully.

He went to West Point and finished first in his class. Afterwards he was briefly married before going into the Army, where he spent five years "patrolling the Berlin Wall," as he has said, rising to the rank of Captain. He then attended Harvard Law, where he became—a year or two after Barack Obama—an editor of the famous *Law Review*. There is little record of any strong political leanings or affiliations from these times. But after two years with a prestigious Washington law firm, he made what now looks like a brilliantly calculated move. He went "home"—not to California, but to Kansas, where his mother grew up, in heartland America.

He started a business, Thayer Aerospace, in Wichita, with three West Point friends. It was a success and when Pompeo sold his interest in 2005, it had 500 employees. He and his second wife, Susan and their one child, a son, were active in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In his religion at least, he appears to be consistent. Like Vice President Mike Pence, Pompeo is a cultural conservative, adamantly opposed to same-sex marriage. Also like Pence and other evangelicals, he seems happy to embrace the president in true Christian fellowship, despite Trump's louche history and habits.

In Wichita the big bosses were the Koch brothers—entrepreneurs and Republican donors, who are staunchly pro-business, anti-tax, and reliably anti-regulation concerning healthcare, the environment and pretty well anything else. A Koch subsidiary invested "seed money" in Pompeo's firm in 1998. A dozen years later, when the Kochs were the main national funders of the Tea Party Republican revolt, Pompeo entered politics, running for a seat in the House of Representatives. Coasting to victory, he reported for duty in Washington with a Koch-groomed lawyer as his chief of staff and within weeks had introduced bills that neatly coincided with the Kochs' multibillion-dollar interests (in oil, petrochemicals, minerals, paper and more). In three terms, Pompeo became "the congressman from Koch" and the top all-time recipient of Koch Industries campaign contributions.

Yet Pompeo is not really a cash-on-the-barrel political hack. For one thing, he seems little interested in money. His total assets, listed as $400,000 in 2015, are small for a successful entrepreneur. They also make him a pauper in Trumpworld, with its Goldman Sachs billionaires. Pompeo's currency is power and influence, which he accumulates and wields with unexpected finesse. He was appointed as CIA director by Trump in January 2017 and he flourished—employee of the month on the grand scale—grasping instantly that in this administration there is only one customer: Trump himself. To please him you must be continually within earshot, and in his sightlines, responding to his moods and soothing his ego. Instead of commuting to

meetings with Trump from Langley, Virginia, where the CIA is situated near a highway clogged with Beltway traffic, Pompeo abandoned his own bureaucracy and parked himself in an office near the White House.

Pompeo had more access to Trump than almost anyone else and by late-2017 he was already being talked about as a possible future Secretary of State. He made himself a diligent informal publicist for Trump, regaling audiences with tales of the boss's quick, receptive brain, his gift for cutting through the ponderous formalities to ask searching questions. By contrast, his doomed predecessor, Tillerson, unadvisedly referred to the president at a meeting of national security advisers as a "fucking moron."

But even as he buttered up the boss, Pompeo served the CIA creditably. He was too political for some in the agency, but by most accounts he was effective. The art of managing up also means keeping the boss safely away. Trump, it's worth remembering, came into office raging against the CIA for accumulated offenses, real and imagined. It was the CIA that had informed the Obama White House of Russia's cyber-campaign of interference in the election in Trump's favour. Trump's reaction was to flip the allegation on its head and warn that the election was being rigged against him. Five months later, when the Christopher Steele dossier surfaced with its inventory of sordid allegations, Trump blamed the CIA and likened its staff to Nazis.

> "In the post-normal Trumpworld, there's an eruption every day. But none of it has touched Pompeo"

The CIA was also involved in the administration's first scandal, the dismissal of Michael Flynn, Trump's first National Security Adviser, who had lied to the vice-president about his conversations with Russian officials. All this commenced on Pompeo's watch, yet he—and his CIA—functioned well enough afterwards. Even as Pompeo parroted Trump's talking points, he "used his close relationship with Trump to protect the spy agency from Trump's wrath," as the *New Yorker*'s Adam Entous has written.

This might not seem much, except in contrast with other departments—Justice, Education, the Environmental Protection Agency—which are being all but destroyed from within. Against all this, Pompeo seems gratifyingly sane. He has acted sensibly in other ways too. Ahead of the Senate hearings that would confirm him as Secretary of State, Pompeo called Hillary Clinton, of all people, to ask for her advice. She told him to replenish the State Department's depleted ranks. He appears to have taken this counsel seriously. Even a sceptical Democrat, Chris Murphy of Connecticut, said he expects Pompeo "will work hard to restore morale at State and work to supplement, not atrophy, the diplomatic tools at the Secretary of State's disposal."

Pompeo handled his Senate hearings for the job of Secretary of State with aplomb, but also offered a disturbing glimpse of how the Republican mind works in the 21st century. The trouble isn't only Trump and his caprices. It is also the long history of Republican opposition to anything that any Democrat says or does—opposition for its own sake. This principle has shaped Pompeo's career. The Benghazi hearings were one example. Another was Obama's bargain with Iran, in 2015, to limit its nuclear programme. Pompeo denounced it at the time and continued to do so throughout the election. "I look forward to rolling back this disastrous deal with the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism," he said in November 2016, when he was being mentioned as a possible CIA head. But in his Secretary of State confirmation hearing, Pompeo astonished the room by saying he would like to "save the deal." Then, in May, when Trump, to the dismay of US allies, said he was sticking to his campaign promise to rip up the deal, Pompeo fell back into line and supported the move. He offered no "Plan B" and made the evidence-free suggestion—nonplussing analysts everywhere—that Tehran was carrying out "assassination operations in the heart of Europe."

Here then, is the contradiction within the Republican Party, where tribal passions must routinely override the mechanics of consistent policy.

Pompeo is not the sole practitioner of this fluid and capricious politics, with its weird blend of stiff-necked dogmatic belief and principle-free expediency—a kind of politics that comes close to nihilism. Strange as it will seem to anyone who remembers how things used to be done, this is diplomacy in the Washington of Trump. There are moments when diplomacy towards Trump's ego might be the only diplomacy that counts.

All smiles: Pompeo takes questions during his Senate confirmation

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Pompeo may have worked out how to "manage up," but some Republicans are still deeply suspicious of him. In his confirmation hearings, his chief detractor was the Republican Rand Paul, a prickly libertarian and "peacenik," who characterised Pompeo as a bloodthirsty stepchild of neoconservatives, the "people who loved the Iraq War so much that they want an Iran war next." Paul may be the last pure libertarian ideologue in the Republican Party, and for weeks he held firm in his opposition to Pompeo's appointment. But at the last minute—just before the committee vote—he crumbled after a phone call from Trump. Pompeo squeaked through.

Yet Paul may have sensed what others have, that in this world of hawks, Pompeo might act as a check on Bolton, a bellicose leftover from the Bush years who to this day maintains the second Iraq War, begun in 2003, was "a resounding success." Throughout 2017, while Pompeo was building a solid record at the CIA, Bolton was auditioning for his new government job via Fox News, Trump's favourite cable channel, aiming guided missiles of wisdom at the Commander in Chief.

Bolton's policy priorities were summarised by the defence writer Fred Kaplan: "launching a first strike on North Korea, scuttling the nuclear arms deal with Iran, and then bombing that country too… not as part of some 'clever madman theory' to bring Kim Jong Un and the mullahs of Tehran to the bargaining table, but rather because he simply wants to destroy them and America's other enemies too." Kaplan offered some advice: "It's time to push the panic button."

But right-wing militarism tends to melt once it touches reality. Trump and North Korea is a good example, as the blustering talk wilted into sensitive-guy hopes to "really start a process." Pompeo—and with luck, Trump, too—aren't so much war-mongers as war-threateners. Insofar as Pompeo, and Trump, too, have a consistent approach, it is best understood as the current heirs to a longstanding "fortress America" ideology, which sees adversaries and allies as belonging to the same non- or anti-American category. This is what gave us the isolationism of the pre-Second World War era and then the cold war "unilateralism" of military figures like General Curtis LeMay of the Strategic Air Command, who argued that the US could defend itself and its interests by amassing a fleet of globe-circling B-52 bombers loaded with hydrogen bombs.

This leads to a theory held by close Trump-watchers, including the *New York Times*'s White House reporter Maggie Haberman, who says that Trump, with a year as president behind him, feels newly-confident and emboldened. The Trump we saw in 2017, the argument goes, was, for all his peacock display, secretly intimidated by the office of the presidency. He wasn't prepared for the tightly-plotted schedule, the protocol, the bewildering size of the executive branch, the alien air of grim majesty and solemn ministerial purpose, especially this last, which emanated from his minders, the White House "grownups"—regents to the 71-year-old child-savant king.

No longer. Trump has gone through a wave of sackings that indicates, not a loss of direction but rather a righting of his internal gyroscope. And he seems to have decided that he really is king of the hill, one who waves the bloody scalps of vanquished enemies and issues triumphant yelps in pre-dawn tweets heard round the world. Like every other slice of Trump Inc, the US government has become an extension of himself. His poll numbers may be among the lowest in history. But everyone else's are worse. The object of reality television competitions, after all, is not so much to win as to survive.

Against this, Pompeo's careerism may be his—and just possibly our—saving grace. Perhaps it is fanciful to hope that his loyalty lies not only with higher-ups, but also with the institutions that have treated him so well. His attitude towards those institutions is still opaque. State Department staff were encouraged when Pompeo ended the hiring freeze. He has since said only a few of the department's vacancies will be filled by new recruits.

But some part of him may understand that it is not the customer but the nation who is the boss, though it is equally possible, as another Democrat worried, that Pompeo will never muster the nerve to "challenge the president in critical moments." He has, however, shown a knack for soothing the boss at moments of high risk, and for rubbing along with him in a way that makes the president feel that he is in charge, rather than somebody with something to prove. With Trump, we have reached the point where the most crucial requirement for Mike Pompeo, the Secretary of State, is not that he enact the president's vision and serve his will, but that he thwart his most dangerous impulses. P

Sam Tanenhaus is US writer-at-large for Prospect

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Caillte ann an eadar-theangachadh

(Lost in translation)

Gaelic is a dying language. Should it be kept alive?

CAL FLYN

The first time I try to learn Gaelic, I go with my mum. We enrol on a week-long immersion course at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic college on Skye. Beginners I, our course is called, and it assumes no knowledge.

We start from the very beginning: consulting notes at every corner, fearing the spotlight, feeling every syllable strange in our mouths. The teacher stands to write a question on the board and we regard it solemnly. "*Dè an t-ainm a th'ort?*" Together we pick the sentence apart and put it together again, wondering at its strangeness: what is the name that is on you?

I learn to put the names on us, with a certain amount of panache. "*Is mise Cal*," I wobble, earning appreciative nods from around the room. "*Agus seo Fiona. Tha i na—*" I explain, with a confidential air, "*—mo mhàthair*."

We've never been the sort of family in which I address my parents by their first names, but it feels nice to be suddenly peers: sitting beside each other in class and sleeping in twin beds. Together we rattle through the basics. "It is windy," we inform each other in halting syllables. Or: "I have one sister." Sometimes these statements are true; more often they aren't—the facts manipulated to generate the simplest or most adventurous language. "I don't like soup," I announce to the class on Friday. "But I like *making* soup." "Liar," says Mum, out of the corner of her mouth, as the teacher observes us good-humouredly from the front of the room. When not teaching immersion courses, he tells us, he is the Gaelic voice of Daddy Pig on BBC Alba's version of *Peppa Pig*.

In the evenings, over dinner in the hall, we practice our conjugations. Sometimes we walk to the rocky beach on the other side of the headland to watch for otters, and on the way we talk about Mum's childhood on the island. A traditional Highland upbringing in many ways—but an Anglophone one, in an increasingly Anglophone world. "Isn't it awful," her father said once, after she and her siblings were grown, "that none of you speak any Gaelic." But he didn't teach it to us, says Mum. They often didn't, that generation.

Another phrase from class: "*A bheil Beurla agad?*" I write it carefully in my jotter. Gaelic spelling in black, a phonetic approximation in green below ("*a vail byurla akit*"), then the English in blue: "Do you [speak] English?" Revising my work that evening, I wonder afresh at the construction of it, the effort of my careful transcription. What was the point?

If there's ever a thread a Gaelic learner shouldn't tug upon, it's this one. Learning any language requires a certain amount of redundancy, it's true: the statement "I am bald," which I also learnt that morning, was not true and, if it had been, would have been self-evident. But there was a deeper anxiety underwriting this particular question: I already know the answer to it, in every possible application. They all speak English, every one of them. There are no monolingual Gaels left. If there's no point in asking if someone can speak English, why should I bother to learn the language at all?

A' chainnt bhorb

(The rude speech)

Gaelic is not a dead language, but it might be described as dying. The number of speakers has been steadily in decline since at least the turn of the 20th century; at last count there were only 57,000 native speakers; that is just 1 per cent of all Scots, and they are largely concentrated in the Outer Hebrides and Skye, probably the only places where you will still hear it spoken in the street.

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Right: the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Gaelic college on the Isle of Skye (above)

The other Celtic languages of the British Isles have been afflicted by a similar drop-off, but to differing degrees. In its census of world languages, Unesco classes Manx and Cornish as "critically endangered" (although this is a victory of sorts, both having previously been declared extinct). Irish Gaelic—which is similar, but separate, to Scottish Gaelic, their relationship akin to that of Spanish and Portuguese—is taught in school across the Republic, and yet used on a daily basis by fewer than 100,000 of a population of 4.7m and thought "definitely endangered" by the UN body. Welsh has been most buoyant—with 19 per cent of the population able to speak the "vulnerable" language.

In all of these places, the withering of Celtic tongues has not come about by accident. Scots Gaelic has endured centuries of pressure from the south; "the south" in this instance encompassing England and—just as significantly—lowland Scotland too. After the Union of Crowns in 1603, James VI—James I in England—sought to unite his subjects under one language, and encouraged clan chiefs to send their eldest child to English-language public schools in the lowlands. Following the 1707 Act of Union, religious schools, which served the wider community, embraced the aim of anglicising the "uncivilised" provinces, instructing in English even where the pupils previously spoke only Gaelic, and punishing the use of their native tongue. Samuel Johnson, who toured the Highlands in 1773, reflected—and entrenched—English attitudes when he dismissed "the rude speech of barbarous people," and wrongly reported that the local language had never been written down. Such prejudice was codified in education policy when this came to be standardised—the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act specifically excluded Gaelic from classrooms.

Na tha e a' ciallachadh a bhith nad Albannach

(What it means to be Scottish)

Even so, at the end of the 19th century, Gaelic remained the dominant language of the Highlands and Hebrides. But a cultural shift had taken hold, a changing in status of the language in the eyes of the speakers themselves. The values of the lowlands were being absorbed by the Highland public. English came to be seen as the way forward—the language of learning, of bettering one's lot. Gaelic, and the Gaelic way of life, was for those who looked backwards, to the past. By the time my mother was a child in the 1950s, it was a language on the brink—fewer than 100,000 still spoke it.

Education law had been modified in 1918, with a formal requirement for "provision" for Gaelic areas, yet in practice low-level persecution of Gaelic speakers continued to hasten its demise over most of the 20th century. "My grandfather was made to wear a wooden block around his neck for speaking Gaelic in class. My father was belted for speaking Gaelic in the playground," recalls the author Donald S Murray. Murray spoke Gaelic at home in rural Lewis, but at school in Stornoway he too was mocked by his teachers. "They called us 'maws,'" he says "and to some extent there's still a residue of that attitude around today, though less so now that people see there can be money in it."

There is: in recent decades a minor industry has grown up around the language, and a professionalisation of its usage. Gaelic-medium education began to be offered in the 1980s, and later there was a boom in Gaelic-language media. Since devolution in 1999, successive Holyrood governments have embraced its preservation: the Labour/Liberal Democrat coalition legislated in 2005 to make it an official language. The current SNP administration has pledged to return the falling number of speakers back to 2001 levels as part of its efforts, it says, to recognise the language's cultural, economic and social value. Gaelic, it explains, is "an integral part of Scotland's heritage."

And yet the reception to these efforts have been mixed, at best. Startlingly virulent opposition bubbles up from odd quarters and at regular intervals. There has been vocal criticism over the resources devoted to Gaelic-language broadcasting, and persistent (though false) rumours that Gaelic-medium education—whose pupils, like most bilinguals, show above-average attainment—unfairly receives extra funding. Most notably, there is an ongoing fracas over bilingual road signs, which flares up every few months.

These signs, critics claim, are inauthentic, dangerous and expensive; sneering tweets and newspaper articles poke fun and hype up the cost. The most bandied-around figure is £26m. In reality, the budget for upgrading road signs—bilingual or not—is £2.5m over five years and will only take place as old signs come up for renewal. At less than 50p a Scot, this is hardly lavish. But, as has been the case in many recent political debates, the detail is not as important as the underlying resentments these arguments represent.

Gaelic campaigners face a trickier time than those who successfully championed Welsh in the 1960s and 70s because the latter enjoyed a clear base—the political heartland of Welsh nationalism in the north and west of the principality, and the cultural heartland of the Welsh language were one and the same. But there's not, and never has been, a one-to-one relationship between Gaelic enthusiasm and Scottish nationalism. To many in the Outer Hebrides, Holyrood looks just as remote as Westminster.

The bickering over signposts is a proxy war; a symptom of something that will not be said outright. What's at stake is the question of Scottish identity—what it means to be "Scottish" and to whom. The task of rallying the nation to Gaelic is further complicated by parallel heritage efforts to preserve the traditional Scots tongue of the lowlands, a close cousin of English. Some rail against what feels like the imposition of Gaelic culture upon them. The journalist Ian Jack, for example, on spotting a dual-language sign in his native Cardonald ("*Cair Dhòmhnaill*"), near Glasgow, wrote of the "sadness" it aroused in him. A Gaelic identity was being constructed for a place in which Gaelic may never have been spoken, he argued—and in so doing rewrote both history and his own memory of the place.

Above, *The Highland Drover's Departure—A Scene in the Grampians* by Edwin Landseer (1835)

Protestors gather outside Parliament House in Melbourne to seek the abolition of Australia Day as a national holiday

Iomallachadh cultarach

(Cultural alienation)

But this dispute over the identity of the nation is only the first aspect of resentment against any Gaelic revival. There is another, with deeper roots, which I have only begun to appreciate more recently. During the research for my book *Thicker Than Water*—a true story of frontier violence during the settlement of Australia—I began to think more about what it means when a minority and its language is absorbed into a more dominant culture. There, of the original 250 Aboriginal languages (600 if one includes dialects) only 18 are still in common use—a result of the efforts by missionaries to eradicate these languages in the name of "progress," many going so far as to rechristen the Aboriginal adults as well as children with names that might have been taken from the pages of a Jane Austen novel.

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Aboriginal culture clung on in the fringes: in private conversation and in the unaudited bush; as a symbol of disobedience. Elsewhere, millennia-old cultures were hounded to extinction, dying out with the elders, the last keepers of knowledge. Some cultures vanished before their existence was documented. Then, after the worst of the violence was over, a new insidious force took hold. Many of the survivors became ashamed of their roots, and shrugged their own culture off like a cloak. They refused to speak the old tongue, or to teach it—they spoke the new language and worshipped the new God. And yet they were left in a strange limbo: though they might absorb British ways, they would never be British. Like expats who have lived abroad for years, many found they felt they did not belong anywhere.

This alienation has a profound effect, which we're only now coming to appreciate. Cultural programmes are now viewed in Australia as an aspect of public health; cultural identity is connected to self-worth and—indirectly—to social and physical resilience. In Gippsland, Victoria, I met Doris Paton: a member of the Gunaikurnai people who held adult learner classes in her traditional language, which has survived in only the most fragmentary form. "They want the knowledge and connection to country," she told me. "Language defines who people are."

Doris's tireless work to regenerate an almost entirely lost language made me rethink my careless attitude towards Gaelic. Although I'd hesitate to describe what happened to its speakers in the same terms as the brutalised Aboriginal Australians, it is true that the Gaels of the Highlands and islands were "culturally conquered" in the 18th and 19th centuries by the rampantly expansive English-speaking, capitalist society of the south.

As the ancient clan system of the Highlands dissolved, many of its residents were uprooted to make way for sheep-farming during the Clearances, when an estimated 500,000 people left the Highlands, often under duress. Of all Scotland's poor in those days, the Gaels were by far the most pitiable: many pitched up in Edinburgh or Glasgow starving, dressed in rags and speaking not a word of English. Even now, Scottish money and power remains heavily concentrated in the lowlands, and it remains an uncomfortable truth that big landowning families in the Highlands tend to speak with English accents.

> **"When we lose a language we lose the ability to describe the landscape it lives in. What it means to be a Highlander becomes diffuse without a language to mark you apart"**

When I lived in England and abroad, people would regularly ask me if I spoke Gaelic and I would have to admit that, no, I didn't, although—and here I would lean in conspiratorially—*no one really did*. This wasn't totally true, and I knew it. Two schoolfriends had, in the early 1990s, gone to Gaelic primaries; I myself had once appeared in the television show *Dè a-nis?* (diving joyfully into the swimming pool in Inverness with my class, for reasons I had not fully understood). From the age of 12, I had the opportunity to study it as my "modern language," instead of French. This choice I had rejected immediately: why learn a language that diminished my horizons, instead of expanding them?

More fool me, then, that in adulthood a knowledge of Gaelic would have translated into paid work in my chosen career. While I photocopied and fetched coffee in London, often for no money, my Gaelic-medium educated friend Derek was presenting programmes and appearing on quiz shows on BBC Alba.

But at that age, the choices we make about which subjects to study are symbolic. They reflect how we imagine ourselves, or the people we might like to become. The fact I had no particular intention to move to France was besides the point. The point was: I didn't want to be defined as "only" a Highlander. Now, having left and returned, I think that maybe I do. As John Muir wrote in another context: going out, I found, was really going in.

The second time I try to learn Gaelic, I sign up for a term of council-run evening classes near my new home in Edinburgh. I take my English boyfriend Richard and our Welsh friend Luke, which I half-expect to prompt surprise, but when we get to the first lesson I find we're no more unusual than anyone else. There is the married couple who refuse to sit together, the linguist who asks circumlocutive questions, the girl with lilac hair and tattoos like stained glass up both arms, who constantly rolls cigarettes during each two-hour session. Sandra, our teacher, is from the Hebrides and believes firmly in rote learning. There is a lot of call and response: "*Dearg*," she shouts, and we chorus it back: "jar-ag," looking at the word and visualising the colour red, willing ourselves to form triangular associations between sound and spelling and sensation.

Our homework is to find the BBC television series *Can Seo* online. It was made in the 1970s and Sandra feels is yet to be surpassed. In it, instruction is interspersed with skits in which phrases we've learned are put into context. They have a surreal, Beckettian quality: actors stand in featureless white expanses and scold each other over perceived slights and humorous Hebridean misunderstandings. "O, tartan, tartan!" as Catriona exclaims during a disagreement over tea cosies. "Nothing but tartan!"

The chanting is fine but it's the grammar that gets us going. Verb-subject-object, as in—the linguist informs us—Hebrew and Arabic. The opening verb's form indicates both the tense and whether it's a statement, negative statement or question. This requires planning ahead; long pregnant pauses as we string together sentences from back to front. Then there are those relational quirks. "*Tha an t-acras orm*!" we tell each other dramatically, rolling our Rs. *The hunger is upon me!*

It's fascinating, and challenging. More than that, there is a whole world in it, one that I can only catch glimpses of. As Murray, the author, explains: "In another language you think in another way. You experience the world in a different way too." Gaelic divides the colour spectrum differently, for one thing: while there are many words for brown—as anyone who has traversed Scotland's northern peatlands will understand—but a single word, *gorm* can describe either the blue of the sky or the green of grass. (Another word, *uaine*, is commonly translated as green, but indicates a vivid, artificial shade that rarely applies to the natural world.)

It used to be said that the Ancient Greeks—who lacked a simple word for blue—were in fact unable to see it. In Homer, the sky is often "iron" or "bronze," the sea "wine-dark" or even "pansy-like." We know now they had the same cone and rod cells in his retinas as we do; but it has also been shown that terminology can affect perception, the *experience* of colour. Those who speak two languages see the world through two sets of eyes.

Celtic crescent

The languages that were left after the Romans and other invaders pushed them to the fringes

Outer Hebrides
Inner Hebrides
SCOTLAND
N.IRELAND
IRELAND
Isle of Man
WALES
ENGLAND
FRANCE

Scottish Gaelic
The 2011 census showed 57,375 people, or just over 1 per cent of Scots, can speak Gaelic. Most speakers are in the Outer Hebrides.

Irish Gaelic
In the Republic of Ireland, study of Irish is compulsary to achieve the school Leaving Certificate.

Manx Gaelic
Despite having less than 2,000 speakers, the *Isle of Man Examiner* runs a monthly bilingual column in Manx.

Welsh
According to a 2013-5 survey, around 24 per cent of people in Wales claim to speak Welsh—more than in the 2011 census.

Cornish
Despite fierce revival efforts, Cornish has fewer than 600 speakers. It is mutually intelligible with Breton.

Breton
Around 200,000 people were recorded as speaking Breton in 2007—down from the one million speakers recorded in 1950.

SOURCE: "THE CELTIC LANGUAGES IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES," CHRIS BISSELL, THE OPEN UNIVERSITY, UK

A' mairsinn beò

(Staying alive)

Every language has grown organically, over many centuries: local custom, history and landscape are encoded in its DNA. In America—another postcolonial land, where many indigenous languages were stamped out—the nature writer Barry Lopez has written movingly of how language can fit against its native land "like another kind of air…" In Alaska, he said, he studied a map crowded with Dena'ini names and descriptions, for which there were only 10 or so English equivalents. When we lose a language we may also lose the ability to describe the landscape it lives in. The land becomes less readily characterised, less gradated, more difficult to read. And so do we: what it means to be a Highlander, for example, becomes diffuse when there is no language to mark you apart.

So then: Gaelic class. This can be my contribution. But, it's difficult. The irregularities of the language soon come to frustrate me. Why are the starts of nouns pronounced in a certain way when there are one or two, but not if there are more? Why do I shout for my father "*Athair*!" but for my mother "*A Mhàthair*!"? My Gaelic teacher is frustrated too. I'm a native speaker, she says. I don't know *why*. It just *does*.

I am not a native speaker, and never will be. After term is over the seeming hopelessness hits me afresh. Without practice, my Gaelic starts to decay. And there are so few places to practice. When I do hear Gaelic speakers on the street, I am too shy to address them. I take out my notes alone, at home, but wrestle with feelings of being a fraud. Who am I kidding? What am I doing this for? My vocabulary shrivels, my amnesia becomes a source of guilt. It's been months now since my last class.

But still, this burning desire. Perhaps I'll never speak it fluently, or even well. But I might hope to read the greats of Gaelic literature—Sorley Maclean, Iain Crichton Smith, Mary MacPherson, Ewan Robertson, Angus Peter Campbell—in the original. Perhaps even one day try my hand at translation: contribute to their literary survival, even in another form.

If Gaelic really is dying, then the people who still speak it today are something like living fossils. We are lucky to have them. But I'd rather it stayed alive, a breathing, flourishing creature. For my part, I can only promise to keep trying. P

Cal Flyn is a journalist and author. Her book "Thicker Than Water" was published in 2016

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The way we were

When we actually won

Extracts from memoirs and diaries, chosen by *Ian Irvine*

The film critic David Thompson recalls the closing seconds of the final match between England and Germany:
"Geoff Hurst has never been an unequivocally great player. Never will be what we call great—meaning the greatness of Di Stefano, Cruyff, Pelé, Law, Best, Puskás, Matthews and maybe a few others. But Geoff Hurst is a very good player, very well coached by everyone from his Dad to Ron Greenwood, and very good players by the luck of the numbers are going to have moments of ineffable splendour. Some are luckier than others in when these moments come.

"Hurst carries the ball on, over a field that now looks like a meadow at the end of a day when a shoot has been held… Tikowski is on the goal line. But as some keepers try to make themselves large, Tikowski seems ready to shrink. Hurst is headlong, hurtling, and he has put the ball on his left. He is going to shoot. You feel it. This is the kind of shot which, in weariness, nine out of 10 very good players… would put in the stands to the cheery derision of the crowd. But Geoff Hurst now is touched, cherry red in the golden light. He is for an instant Roy of the fucking Rovers. He… shoots an insanely accurate, unstoppable, rising shot that goes past Tikowski like an aircraft taking off and explodes against the roof of the net…

"… This is one of those moments you know all your life, by the light, the air, the feel, the force—like making love or seeing a baby squirm from the mother's body. This is the goal that allows us to forget the third goal that bounced on the line. This is 4-2. I roar in the living-room in Isleworth in front of the black-and-white television. My son Mathew cannot quite yet know the grace that has touched Geoff Hurst. So he cries in alarm. But I am crying first… We have won."

Denis Law, the Scottish Manchester United striker, refused to watch the match and played a round of golf instead. But as he walked off the 18th green, he heard a roar from the clubhouse. He knew what it meant:
"England had won the World Cup. It was the blackest day of my life."

In the general election of March 1966 the Labour government under Harold Wilson had improved its majority in parliament to 97. However the country's economic weakness continued. Richard Crossman, Minister for Housing and Local Government, observed in his diary:
"I must record a big change in Harold's personal position. It has been a tremendous help for him that we won the World Cup… That may well mean that his luck which deserted him after he had dealt with the seamen's strike, has really turned now. When I told Anne [Crossman's wife] over lunch today that the World Cup could be a decisive factor in strengthening sterling she couldn't believe it. But I am sure it is. Our men showed real guts and the bankers, I suspect, will be influenced by this, and the position of the government correspondingly strengthened."
The following year market pressures obliged the government to devalue sterling.

Brazil suffered their worst performance in a World Cup, being eliminated in the first round. Pelé, the team's captain, had been the object of brutal tackling, especially in the match against Portugal when he had to leave the pitch. He later observed:
"When I first came back to Brazil after the World Cup games of 1966, my heart wasn't in playing football. The games had been a revelation to me in their unsportsmanlike conduct and weak refereeing. England won the games that year but in my opinion she did not have the best team in the field."

Following the bitter and violent match against Argentina in the quarter-finals, Alf Ramsey, England's manager addressed the television cameras:
"We have still to produce our best football and this best is not possible until we meet the right kind of opposition, and that is a team that comes out to play football, and not to act like animals."
This caused long-lasting outrage throughout South America. After the final, Bolivia's biggest-selling newspaper, Presencia, opined:
"There are things that cannot be sold. Not at any price. I don't understand either politics or sport but I can understand, as millions of people around the world understand, that England has sold its… reputation for chivalry, for fair play and for correctness, for a football trophy… They hatched a football conspiracy against Latin America. We may be animals and savages but we would never consider what the cultured and civilised English have done. England may now be the world champions but it is no longer the country of culture, of education, of gentlemen."

Patrick Fairweather, 2nd Secretary at the British Embassy in Rome, sent a despatch to the Foreign Office about Italian reaction to the competition. He observed:
"The World Cup in England has provided further proof, if proof were needed, that a very good way to damage international relations is to have a really big sporting competition." P

Geoff Hurst scores against West Germany during the 1966 World Cup final

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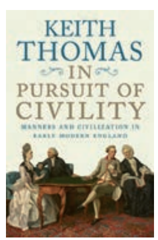
Arts & books

Bad manners

Politeness is often the veneer that disguises our most barbaric instincts, argues *Freya Johnston*



In Pursuit of Civility: Manners and Civilization in Early Modern England
by Keith Thomas (Yale University Press, £20)

Rude awakening: polished diners ignore the rowdy lower-classes in a 15th-century Flemish illustration (left)

"Never park here," thunders a sign attached to the railings of one Oxford college. As such communications go, this one has plenty to recommend it—but alas its brevity is far from typical. In recent years there has been a surge in the number of English signs identifying themselves as a "Polite Notice." These two six-letter words often herald a long message that errs in every other respect on the side of impoliteness: "Stop pissing all over the lavatory like a fucking animal," to take one recently spotted example. That is, admittedly, an unusual instance of the genre. The majority of polite notices have to do with cars and where not to put them, rather than with toilets and how not to treat them.

"Stop pissing…" adopts a very different tone from that I remember noticing in pub conveniences in the 1970s and 80s: "If you sprinkle when you tinkle, be a sweetie and wipe the seatie." Could that twee little poem be called a truly polite notice? Well yes, in the sense that it doesn't unleash a torrent of expletives, nor does it assume that you're at fault; it tries to flatter you into good behaviour rather than abuse you for your crimes or beastliness. But the chief reason for its superior politeness is that it doesn't tell you it is being polite in the first place.

The passive-aggressive "Polite Notice" offers a little review of itself before you've got to the gist of what it's ordering you to do—or, typically, what not to do. Don't get annoyed by what I'm about to say, it suggests: I'm polite, you know. (Giving inanimate objects or vehicles a first-person voice is another curious feature of modern British manners: a bus will sometimes announce to hopeful travellers, "Sorry, I'm not in service"). Polite notices tell you how to respond to them before you've even got to the bit that tells you how to behave. They are polite, after all.

This sort of thing is everywhere. Children and adults will often say "no offence" before or after saying something crushingly offensive, or introduce a nasty remark with a phrase along the lines of "I wouldn't want you to think I'm nasty, but…" Politicians sometimes say "with respect" to interviewers before making clear their contempt for the question. There's nothing new about rhetorical devices that let you have your cake and eat it—"not to mention the weather" gives speakers the chance both to mention that blasted weather and to leave it out. But the subgenre of such remarks that tries to dictate in advance how its targets might categorise it, and by extension the character of whoever might be saying it, does seem to be a recent and peculiar development.

The irritation it causes to those of us who get riled by such things is that the person writing the "Polite Notice" or concluding an email with "Kind regards" is incorporating a positive appraisal of themselves into what they are about to say. Whatever else it may be, this represents a nibble at our freedom as individuals. Polite notices and kind regards try to deny our capacity to make up our own minds about them and the effects of what they say.

Why is it worse to conclude with "Kind regards" than "Yours sincerely"? Because kindness is something that necessarily involves the other person, the one to whom you are writing, and it's that person, the recipient of the message, who ought to be judging whether what you've said is kind or not. It isn't for you, the sender of the regards, to say. Sincerity, on the other hand, is feasibly in the power of the sender to judge, so it is an appropriate thing to claim on his or her own behalf (even if the recipient may have good cause to suspect a complete absence of sincere feelings).

> "Polite notices tell you how to respond to them before you've even got to the bit that tells you how to behave"

All this is only to argue that any discussion or history of manners has to concern itself as much with their reception as with their acquisition or imposition. To be understood as polite or civil, a way of speaking or behaving needs another person to recognise it as such. What also needs to be recognised is that an alternative, impolite way of handling the same subject or situation is always available (and indeed sometimes unleashed by politeness, as in the stream of expletives following that toilet notice).

The historian Keith Thomas points out in *The Pursuit of Civility* that "the notion of civilisation is essentially relative: it has to have an opposite to be intelligible." In any society worthy of the name, understanding something of that relativity and opposition also means understanding that we are free to bend or fudge the rules; to complain about them; to laugh at them. Such freedom is a defining feature of community, tolerance and interdependence, which is why it is so essentially impolite to tell other people how to respond to you, or to assume in advance that they will do exactly what you say they should.

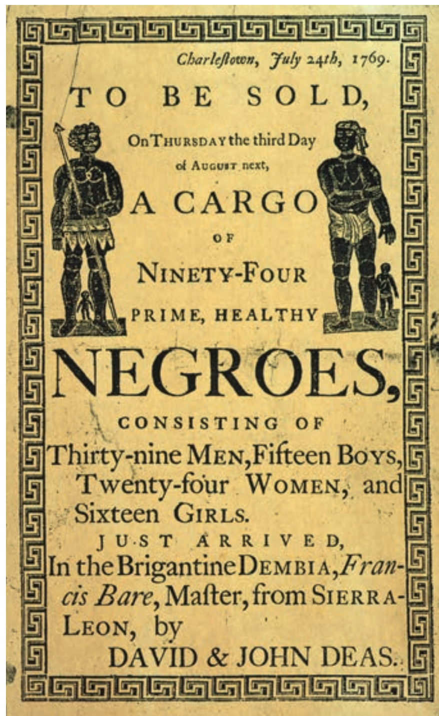
As Thomas's clear, elegant and rangy new book serves to show, one theory of civility will tell you that it is all about acknowledging the separate existence, property, privacy and right to respect of another person. But another prevalent and persuasive theory of civility will insist that such codes of behaviour are all about subjugation: they are visited on people who must be brought ▶

to order rather than treated as equals. Thomas quotes the antiquarian Edmund Bolton (born around 1575), who announced that it was "no infelicity to the barbarous" to be "subdued by the more polite and noble"; after all, to possess "wild freedom" meant nothing compared with the gifts from above of "liberal arts and honourable manners." It isn't hard to imagine what the wild and free response to that might sound like.

Thomas finds it "paradoxical" that "the English were deeply involved in the slave trade at a time when their enthusiasm for personal liberty had never been greater." But mightn't the English enthusiasm for freedom have been so marked precisely *because* of their involvement in the slave trade? The denial of liberty to a group of people whose value as traded commodities permitted the rise of English wealth, and therefore refinement and polished manners, would have fostered a sharp awareness of the value of freedom—whether or not those enthusiasts for liberty openly acknowledged its mirror image in the slave trade. Beyond observing that "Internal civility, it seemed, was wholly compatible with external barbarism," Thomas does not try to answer Samuel Johnson's question about the Americans who wanted independence (which he quotes): "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" But this kind of rude enquiry must be absolutely central to any history of civilised life, whether we are thinking about the imposition of western values on other nations or about the more general claim that there can be, as Friedrich Nietzsche pointed out, no feast without cruelty.

Refinement is inevitably a paradox, since to the same extent that human beings can be shown to have advanced culturally and socially we can also be shown to have declined in virtue and vigour—not least because what has allowed us to advance is, among other things, the exploitation of other people. The first book of William Cowper's great rambling poem *The Task* (1785) traces the British ascent to civility from the "hardy chief" who took his brief repose on a "rugged rock" to the modern poet, lolling about indoors on a nice comfy sofa. Cowper, a keen abolitionist, enumerates "the blessings of civilised life," to be sure, concluding that it is a desirable state. But his final view is of "the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy," a loss of innocence and native strength that will always accompany greater riches and sophistication.

The first appearance in print of Norbert Elias's *The Civilising Process* (1939), the broadest and most influential study to date of European manners, coincided with the beginning of the Second World War, and with good reason. Elias was attempting to explain the necessary interplay between violence and civilisation, rather than the ceding of one to the other. His book gained little attention for the next three decades, however, until the first volume—on the history of manners—was translated into English. In that same year, 1969, Kenneth Clark's lavish documentary series *Civilisation* first aired on BBC2 (its nine-episode sequel, *Civilisations*, was shown earlier this year). Elias argued that post-medieval attitudes to sex, cruelty, bodily functions, table manners and forms of speech had been gradually redefined by higher and higher thresholds of shame and repugnance, and by the increasing exercise of self-restraint in individual behaviour.


Charlestown, July 24th, 1769.
TO BE SOLD,
On THURSDAY the third Day of AUGUST next,
A CARGO
OF
NINETY-FOUR
PRIME, HEALTHY
NEGROES,
CONSISTING OF
Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,
Twenty-four WOMEN, and
Sixteen GIRLS.
JUST ARRIVED,
In the Brigantine DEMBIA, *Francis Bare*, Master, from SIERRA-LEON, by
DAVID & JOHN DEAS.

Elias's work was criticised, as was Kenneth Clark's, by some who thought it assumed too remorseless a model of European progress from barbarism to refinement. However, as Elias himself pointed out, he never equated western sophistication with superiority to other cultures, while the subtitle of Clark's series, "A Personal View," was intended to disclaim comprehensiveness.

The BBC has explained that the new *Civilisations*—fronted by three presenters—offers more than "one man's personal view of western European civilisation." This one-man view is exactly what we have in Thomas's *The Pursuit of Civility*, and such a perspective still has plenty to offer. In seven thorough, well-plotted chapters Thomas patiently unpicks the vocabulary of manners and considers how it might involve or come into conflict with the dictates of morality and compassion. His approach may be rooted in western culture of the early modern period, but in his discussions of trade and slavery he frequently looks beyond it. He is alive to the limitations and contradictions of his human subjects, as well as to the vitality and influence of their achievements.

There are some funny moments here. One involves Keith Thomas's lunchtime encounter with Norbert Elias, "world authority on the history of table manners," when Thomas apparently knocked a jug of water all over the table. Elias's response is not recorded; perhaps it was unprintable. It would have been good to learn more about comparable embarrassments in the early modern period—tales such as that reported by John Aubrey involving the Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), who, "making of his low obeisance to Queen Elizabeth, happened to let a Fart, at which he was so abashed and ashamed that he went to Travel [for] seven years. On his return the Queen welcomed him home, and said, 'My Lord, I had forgot the Fart.'"

But there are far more examples in *The Pursuit of Civility* of those flaunting a lack of embarrassment than of those suffering from an excess of it. Few women appear in this study, but one of the best is both nameless and shamelessly polite in the act of

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Breaches of honour: top left, slaves on sale in South Carolina, 1769; below, the Earl of Oxford, who fled England over flatulence; and a robust response to a US bilboard; above, French cruelty versus English honesty, by Thomas Rowlandson

relieving herself: "I have known an old woman in Holland set herself on the next hole to a gentleman," observed one 18th-century traveller, "and civilly offer him her mussel shell by way of scraper after she had done with it herself."

Thomas's distinguished career as a historian might be summarised as one of subduing wildness to order; his previous books have concerned themselves with the decline of magic, the suppression of misrule in schools, and man's relationship to animals. His sense of the proximity of the supernatural, anarchic, or non-human to our most civilised institutions may be what led him to style this latest study *The Pursuit of Civility*, rather than (say) a "Rise" or a "Triumph." Civility might well be unattainable, as elusive or shifting a target as happiness itself.

Perhaps what is most heartening, in the end, is neither strict conformity to the rules of civilised life, nor utter disregard for them, but the ability of human beings to honour a breach in the observance and an observance in the breach. William Empson concluded in 1935 that a "gentleman was not the slave of conventions because at need he could destroy them." He *doesn't* destroy them, but the point is that he could if he had to, and perhaps all of us can aspire to be gentlemen, in that regard at least. There are countless excellent examples of people somehow contriving at one and the same time to endorse and resist the manners imposed on them and the claims made about them.

> "Keith Thomas lunched with an expert on table manners, and knocked over a water jug"

Here's one. About five years ago, a series of American billboards attempted to persuade men to undertake preventative medical testing in order to catch the early symptoms of cancer, heart disease and other life-sapping conditions. The slogan adopted to encourage these stereotypically reluctant male citizens to undergo a check-up was: "This year thousands of men will die from stubbornness." Beneath one of these well-meant notices appeared the reply, in spray paint, at once rebelling against and fatally confirming that prognosis: "No we won't."

Freya Johnston is a fellow at St Anne's College, Oxford and the editor of "If Not Critical" (OUP, 2018), a book of lectures by Eric Griffiths

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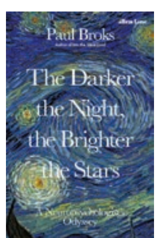
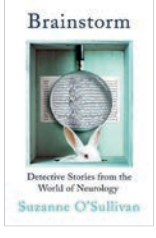
Mysteries of the mind

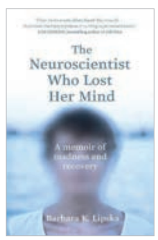
The best neuroscience writing acknowledges just how little we know about the workings of the brain, finds *Julian Baggini*



The Darker the Night, the Brighter the Stars: A Neuropsychologist's Odyssey
by Paul Broks (Allen Lane, £20)



Brainstorm: Detective Stories from the World of Neurology
by Suzanne O'Sullivan (Chatto & Windus, £16.99)



The Neuroscientist Who Lost Her Mind: A Memoir of Madness and Recovery
by Barbara K Lipska (Bantam, £16.99)

Every culture has its shamans, oracles and priests who act as intermediaries between the known and the unknown, the seen and the unseen. In secular societies that role is increasingly being filled by scientists working at the frontiers of human understanding. Thanks to the mind-boggling obscurity of quantum theory many of these are physicists—Carlo Rovelli is only the latest to have achieved almost prophetic status.

However, even physicists are denied access to the holiest of holies: human consciousness. The anointed guardians of this sacred space are neuroscientists. Almost everyone now knows that the brain is the organ of thought and feeling, making those who study it the closest people we have to experts on the human soul. This generates both awe and fear. Would they pluck out the heart of our mystery? Would they sound us from our lowest notes to the top of our compasses? How unworthy a thing they would make of humanity, reducing its noble spirit to the base corporeality of cells and electricity!

But that is precisely not what the most exalted of these high priests do. Like all the most influential religious leaders, for every mystery they solve they pose another. Their guidance takes us deeper into the human mind than ever before but their torches only illuminate a fraction of it. The more we explore *anima incognita*, the more evident it is just how inadequate our maps of it are.

It would be stretching the clerical analogy to suggest that neuroscience has its sacred texts. But it certainly has revered ones, read by laypeople eagerly seeking a glimpse into their own elusive essence. The first great writer in this genre was the Russian Alexander Luria whose *The Mind of a Mnemonist*, published in English in 1968, inspired a young Oliver Sacks, whose own first book *Awakenings* followed in 1973. Luria and Sacks established the template of using bizarre case studies, such as the eponymous *Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* in Sacks's 1985 work, to explore the strangeness and fragility of human consciousness and sense of self. When a year earlier Sacks had published *A Leg to Stand On*, describing how, after an encounter with a bull, he lost awareness of his left leg, he established memoir as a second strand of popular neuroscientific writing.

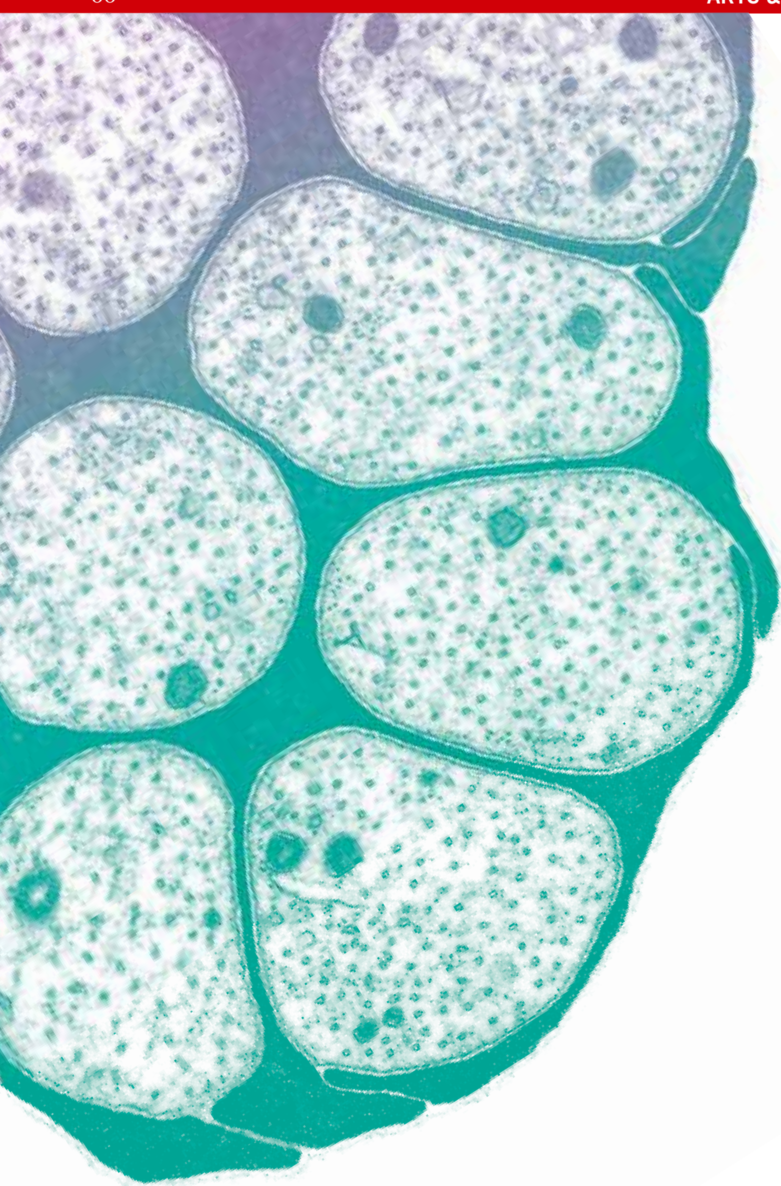
The problem for those who followed Luria and Sacks was that it was impossible not to walk in their footsteps, but equally impossible to fill their shoes. The clinical neuropsychologist Paul Broks is one of the few who has managed to rise to the challenge. His brilliant 2003 debut *Into the Silent Land* was in Sacks territory, but Broks, a former *Prospect* columnist, had his own distinctive voice, marked by an unusual combination of analytic thought and poetic lyricism. The fact that it has taken 15 years for the follow up to emerge says something about how seriously Broks takes his writing. Sadly, however, that is not the only reason for the hiatus. As *The Darker the Night, the Brighter the Stars* explains, Broks has had to deal with the illness and subsequent death of his wife, Kate, from cancer.

His book, though, is much more than a memoir of grief. It is as though Kate's death provided the unwanted opportunity to put his life's work and thought into context. Far from enabling him to tie everything together, the effect is the opposite. The book is comprised of dozens of short chapters that don't obviously link with each other. Some are philosophical essays on the nature of the self and consciousness, some imagined conversations and made-up autobiography, some retellings of Greek myths. The book's piecemeal structure dramatises the concept of the self Broks endorses: there is no single, stable, permanent essence, only fragments that add up to a reasonably, but never completely, coherent whole.

> "According to Broks there is no single, stable, permanent essence—only fragments"

In lesser hands this would be indulgent and pretentious, but the book is grounded by its author's unflinching honesty. Reading CS Lewis's *A Grief Observed*, Broks found his own experience to be so different "that I began to question whether I had grieved at all." He was not depressed, numb or angry, just hit by "overwhelming waves of sadness." For Broks, "grief is seeing the universe upturned, as if through alien eyes, the stars tumbling like kaleidoscope beads. Stabs of absence; stabs to the brain and heart; an entering of the flesh, a knowing in the flesh that she's not here anymore."

This captures Broks's tone well: unsentimental but not unfeeling. He doesn't shy away from observing what others might find unsavoury. He identifies what he calls "bereavement envy" in friends who had problems with their own partners. "My relationship with Kate was about to reach ▶



its inevitable conclusion, but it would be a clean, final break, unlike the guilt-ridden, tearing-apart they were going through."

But if neuropsychologists were a priesthood, Broks would be the first to try to get himself defrocked. During his darkest days, he notices "my knowledge of clinical psychology has seemed irrelevant, or if not irrelevant then certainly peripheral to my deepest needs and concerns." When he hears the often-repeated claim that science has rejected the soul, self and free will as illusions, he expresses some impatience. "The human brain is a storytelling machine and the self is a yarn it spins. That's it. Nothing more. The story is all. Blah, blah, blah."

It's easy enough to understand, as Broks does, that there is no permanent self; that we are always in flux and internally divided. The difficult task is to know how to live in the light of this knowledge. For this you need the kind of insight that comes from close attention to whole human beings, not from analysis of their brain scans. Broks has this kind of insight in spades.

Despite, or rather because of, his willingness to stare reality in the face, Broks's book is ultimately uplifting. Without naming it, he seems to capture the spirit of the Japanese concept *mono no aware*—the bitter-sweet pathos of things. This fragile, fleeting life is both beautiful and absurd, a source of joy and sorrow. So even at the peak of his mourning, he could be captured by the wondrous thought: "*I'm still here*. Right here, right now," a feeling made even more poignant by the fact that Kate is not.

Neurologist Suzanne O'Sullivan's *Brainstorm* is a more conventional collection of 12 case studies, or "detective stories" as the subtitle eye-catchingly puts it. Serial readers of books like this will be able to tick off the inevitable appearance of Phineas Gage—the 19th-century railroad worker whose personality changed dramatically when part of his frontal lobe was destroyed by an iron bar—before we have even reached the end of the introduction. The famous HM—who was unable to form long-term memories and appears in Sacks's work—obligingly turns up soon after.

Despite breaking no boundaries, O'Sullivan's book is a very welcome addition to the literature. Her specialism is epilepsy, which has 50m sufferers worldwide, 600,000 in the UK alone. Of these, 70 per cent can have their symptoms put into remission with medication, but 30 per cent continue to have seizures. *Brainstorm* is an exercise of much-needed public education about this surprisingly prevalent and often debilitating disease.

O'Sullivan's humanity and humility whisper gently from every page. Far from presenting herself as a medical hero, she is brutally honest about the limits of what she and science can achieve. "It's exciting to read about every new innovation, but my optimism is always contained," she writes. Both public and professionals can be dazzled by the latest brain scans but O'Sullivan deflates the hype when she describes an experiment that showed an area of a salmon's brain activated when the fish was asked questions about their emotions. Even when brain mapping is accurate, there is often little that can be done with the data. "Neurologists are in the business of trying to preserve brain cells because nobody knows how to replace them. We are as bad at curing brain disease as we ever were. Almost."

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> "An operation on Gabriel ended his seizures; but it left him more irrational, paranoid and unpredictable"

There are some happy endings in this book but O'Sullivan refuses to cherry-pick the feel-good stories. One patient, Adrienne (all names are changed) was cured when a small section of her temporal lobes was removed. But surgery remains a tricky and uncertain option: an operation on Gabriel, another patient, ended his seizures; but it left him more irrational, paranoid and unpredictable. His marriage fell apart and he lost his job.

Others also did not improve under their doctor's care. Eleanor got worse, having seizures every day. Tim made it to university only to die from Sudep (sudden unexpected death in epilepsy), which kills one in a thousand epileptics annually, 600 a year in the UK. O'Sullivan finds the "lack of both cure and prevention for problems like multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, autism, schizophrenia and many more" deeply sobering.

Like Broks, O'Sullivan's honesty means that when she does offer shafts of light we appreciate their warmth and brightness. Eleanor had to change her life drastically but, says O'Sullivan, "she did not consider herself ill. She accommodated her epilepsy but it didn't define her." Similarly, Maya had epilepsy for 50 years, severely limiting her life choices. But "she lived with it and tolerated it. She seemed to me to be a woman who had had a good life—not perhaps the life she would have had if she had not developed epilepsy, but good nonetheless." You can understand O'Sullivan's claim that she often thinks she is of little help to her patients; but it is clear that her patients are very lucky to have her.

Barbara K Lipska's memoir is a reminder that neuroscientists are not all great sages. *The Neuroscientist Who Lost Her Mind* is a standard inspirational page-turner, "an

incredible journey" full of the usual martial and sporting clichés. She stays in shape to fight her cancer "like a soldier always ready for battle," and inspired by cyclist Lance Armstrong—an odd choice you might think now—finds herself "getting ready for the competition of a lifetime."

Lipska reveals, sometimes unwittingly, just how little her neurological expertise had prepared her to face mortality. Used to feeling fit, she seems to fall for the myth that by following the right lifestyle, sickness can be kept at bay. "We had ambitious plans for our future," she writes. "Cancer was not among them."

> "We shouldn't worry that the incessant probing of human subjectivity is going to abolish wonder"

It would take a monster not to feel deep sympathy for all Lipska went through. Apart from the physical symptoms caused by the metastasis melanoma in her brain, she suffered two months of mental illness—"a bizarre tailspin" into a very "dark place." But the unreal perfection of her life and her family as she describes them makes it hard to like her. This driven successful woman runs marathons and triathlons but after every one has still "returned home tired but beaming with happiness and prepared our dinner." She and her husband "love to sit in a spacious dining room overlooking the woods enjoying glasses of wine," at least when they're not "watching a movie on the huge flat-screen television in our basement turned home theatre." Their children, meanwhile, "have beautiful three-storey homes of their own" as well as grandchildren who adore their *babcia*.

The contrast with Broks is striking. Fearing her death, Lipska finds herself thinking about her husband: "*Mirek cannot stay alone. How difficult it would be for him in our house, with everything the same but without me there anymore?*" The late Kate was less sentimental. "You'll find someone else soon enough when I'm gone," she tells Broks, adding "A lot of widowers find a new partner within a year or two," before suggesting candidates.

Towards the end of the book, Lipska thinks: "I am not exactly the same person that I was before my illness. But strangely, I feel completely myself." Her thought ends just at the point Broks would have taken it up. His book brims with fascinating reflections on the nature of self. At one point, looking through old photographs, he notices that "I'm recognising furniture and wallpaper more than I'm making connection with my childhood self." That's initially surprising but it shouldn't be. A child changes more in a decade than the home they live in. This observation echoes William James's idea that a person is in part made up of their possessions, clothes and surroundings. This "material self" is sometimes more stable and constant than the ego—the perception of an enduring "I" that persists in the stream of consciousness.

Nearly 50 years after Luria gave birth to the popular neuroscience book, Broks and O'Sullivan show that its potential is far from exhausted. Nor should we worry that the incessant probing of human subjectivity is going to abolish wonder. "I have no need to see humanity unravelled," writes O'Sullivan. "But, of course, I needn't worry. We are not even close."

Julian Baggini's latest book is "A Short History of Truth: Consolations for the Post-Truth World" (Quercus)

Rock the books

The current gang of pop writers are the best we've ever had. But are they eulogising a dying art form, asks *DJ Taylor*

Sticky Fingers: The Life and Times of Jann Wenner and Rolling Stone Magazine
by Joe Hagan (Canongate, £25)

For a generation of middle-aged and mostly male British rock fans, 8th March 2018 was a date fit to be carved in stone. On that day the proprietors of the *New Musical Express*, founded in 1952, announced they would be closing the print edition and, like other magazines blasted by the zephyrs of technological change, concentrating on the website. Curiously, none of the people who took to newspaper columns to lament the *NME*'s passing seemed to have much interest in the contemporary magazine—the final incarnation was a flimsy free-sheet handed out in student union bars and HMV. No, their grief was focused on a golden age—the period 1974-81—when the magazine offered a template for how you might approach the notoriously tricky subject of writing seriously about rock and roll.

Forty years ago, as the Sex Pistols slid rancorously off the map, there were a quarter of a million *NME* kids. I was one of them, drawn not only by the lustre of the journalistic talent (Nick Kent, Charles Shaar Murray, Mick Farren, Julie Burchill) but by the suspicion that it offered a gateway to a bohemian and vaguely counter-cultural world. It was in the *NME* that I first read an interview with Ian McEwan, heard mention of JG Ballard (a great influence on the punk dystopians) and, a bit later, when the writers expanded to include theory-minded egg-heads like Paul Morley and Ian Penman, came across the names of Baudrillard and Derrida. The enticing scent that blew out of its 64 weekly pages was, to quote biographer Joe Hagan writing about *Rolling Stone*, not "just about music, but the things and the attitudes that the music embraces."

And what were they? The pre-digital rock experience was founded on an almost mythological compact between the fan and the group or singer. Fans wanted advance news, gossip, and above all corroboration of the mighty genius that they had set out to worship, and the music magazine worked as a conduit. The performer could exist at some stratospherically detached remove (a jet-setting,

yacht-piloting superstar) or he could be a super-charged version of the boy, or sometimes girl, next door. Still the fan's attitude was the same—fanatic, completist, narrowly possessive.

Between 1978 and 1982, The Jam were "my" group, in the same way that Norwich City were "my" football team or George Orwell was "my" writer. Paul Weller's song-writing prompted the same reaction in me that Orwell had to Henry Miller: "He knows all about me... He wrote this specially for me." All of which was given greater significance by the fact Weller was a working-class autodidact from Woking, while I studied modern history at St John's College, Oxford.

Serious writing about rock and roll did not, of course, begin with the *NME*. Its origins can be traced back to §the moment that music critic Wilfrid Mellers detected "pentatonic clusters" in the Beatles' early work. *Crawdaddy*, the first highbrow US music magazine, was in business by 1966. But it was Jann Wenner's *Rolling Stone*, launched from San Francisco in the autumn of 1967, which demonstrated that high-end rock and roll writing could make money. As Mick Jagger once remarked, "though he didn't invent serious pop criticism, Jann was the one who popularised it."

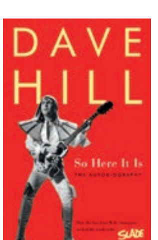
Wenner was one of the thousands of baby-boomers for whom the Beatles and the Stones were not only individually fascinating but a collective springboard to the celebrity-strewn world they yearned to inhabit. Journalism, as Hagan puts it in *Sticky Fingers*, his biography of Wenner, "was his VIP pass to everything he hoped to be."

Not that these ambitions debarred you from facing several different ways at once. If *Rolling Stone* was forged

***NME* of the people: clockwise from top left, the last ever issue; Pamela Des Barres with Alice Cooper; Suede's Brett Anderson; the German group Can; and seventies rockers Slade**

I'm With the Band: Confessions of a Groupie
by Pamela Des Barres (Omnibus Press, £14.99)

Coal Black Mornings
by Brett Anderson (Little, Brown, £16.99)



So Here It Is: The Autobiography
by Dave Hill (Unbound, £20)

All Gates Open: The Story of Can
by Rob Young and Irmin Schmidt (Faber, £25)

in the crucible of the mid-1960s West Coast counter-culture, then its highly astute founding editor soon discovered that he could only succeed by taking the counter-culture mainstream. Tom Wolfe (who died in May) and Hunter S Thompson were swiftly piped on board; celebrity interviewees included Dustin Hoffman and the Democrat presidential candidate George McGovern. But however thronged the pages might have been with Richard Brautigan's poetry or Roy Lichtenstein's pop art montages, Wenner rarely forgot about the elemental compact between fan and star.

From the start, *Rolling Stone* was crammed with Beatles gossip. Wenner's cultivation of the Fab Four's publicist Derek Taylor paid a spectacular final dividend with the two-part interview with John Lennon in 1970, the year the band split up. By this time *Rolling Stone*'s circulation was well north of 200,000.

There was an equally spectacular falling out after Wenner reneged on the deal he had cut with Lennon and printed the interview in book form. He could afford to do this because, as Hagan points out, he no longer needed the person who had made him famous.

"Mick Jagger was clearly a very intelligent person but I wanted to treat him like a stud"

All this lets loose another spectre that lurked near the heart of the fan/star contract: straightforward, or sometimes not so straightforward, exploitation. In the context of the late-1960s "freedom" usually meant the freedom of men to exploit women. *I'm With the Band*, first published in 1987, and now reissued with an extra helping of salacity, is an odd book altogether. Like Jann Wenner, Pamela Des Barres was a fan-girl, whose Beatles-fixated high school diaries ("I love Paul, I'm in love with his body") turn out to be an uncannily prophetic résumé of her young-adult life.

Graduating to the West Coast scene in late adolescence, Des Barres was a companion to Jagger, Jimmy Page and Noel Redding, who played bass for Jimi Hendrix. Soon she became a leading light of the GTOs, aka "Girls Together Outrageously," a socio-musical art collective sponsored by Frank Zappa, and an associate of the Plaster-Casterers, who took impressions of rock-star genitalia. The girls clearly wanted to have fun but on their own terms, and were keen on self-empowerment. But given that you are never quite sure who is exploiting whom—Des Barres was still at school when she began hanging out with bands—all this grants her recollections an oddly discomfiting tone: "Mick Jagger was clearly a very intelligent person but I wanted to treat him like a stud." An awareness of what you want is undercut by a stifling sense of what is expected of you, and complicated by your inability to calibrate the two. In much the same way, the Viv Albertine of *Clothes, Clothes Clothes, Music, Music, Music, Boys, Boys, Boys* (2016), a memoir of her time in the Slits, is simultaneously a feminist trailblazer and a woman who feels herself almost obliged to have oral sex with John Lydon.

Clearly, the myths and legends of rock and roll—its bad boys, its Satanist chic, its elegant wastrels—are a mixed blessing. Most, though by no means all, of the first wave of serious books about rock music were written by music journalists who had personal experience of the mythologising process. Stanley Booth, whose *The True Adventures of the Rolling Stones* (1984), memorialises the 1969 tour of the US, was a Keith Richards obsessive who nearly died in the rapt pursuit of his idol's lifestyle. Jon Savage, author of *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (1992), a pioneering work of musical sociology, was a one-time trainee lawyer whose legal career was irrecoverably pitched off course by exposure to the abrasive soundtrack of the summer of 1976.

Meanwhile another brand of writer was beginning to move into a firmament once populated by the music press scribe: the musician him—or herself. The old-style rock memoir, quite often ghost-written by a name-checked amanuensis, was usually little more than a cavalcade of birds, boodle and platinum discs. It takes a work like Brett Anderson's autobiography to advertise just how far the genre has advanced in the last couple of decades. Just as his band Suede, with its intellectual tang and modish lyrics, was a cut above your average rock band, so Anderson, despite a weakness for unnecessary adverbs, is a cut above the average rock-memoirist. In fact, the distinctive aspect of *Coal Black Mornings* lies not in the accounts of his time on the frontline of mid-1990s Britpop, but of the time before he was famous. Anderson, who hails from a village on the fringe of Haywards Heath, is circumspect enough to realise that large amounts of native pop music comes from the English suburbs, conceived by teenagers "yearning for the thrill and promise beyond."

Not, of course, that the old-style rock memoir ever went away. The charm of *So Here It Is*, the fan-funded autobiography of the guitarist from 1970s glam-rock behemoths Slade, is that it could have been written at any time over the past 50 years. Dave Hill has no social or political awareness to speak of (Enoch Powell, his mother's MP, is mentioned without comment), and the rewards of success are entirely material ("Well done, son," Hill senior remarks, greeting him on the doorstep of his posh new house). It is redeemed by both its guilelessness and the sense—quite as marked as in Anderson's more upmarket effort—of a personal myth triumphantly vindicated, in this case the working-class boy from the West Midlands who scores half-a-dozen Number One singles and a Rolls-Royce with the number plate YOB1.

Over half a century since Jann Wenner set to work in a marketplace dominated by teen magazines like *16* and *Tiger Beat*, we inhabit a golden age of serious music writing. Some of the original fans grew up and began writing; hundreds of thousands more acquired the disposable income necessary to create a market for those books. One of the by-products is a work like *All Gates Open*, a mammoth celebration of a once obscure avant-garde German group from the 1970s called Can, with erudite contributions from its Stockhausen-tutored keyboard player.

One irony is that the accomplishment on display in writing about bygone rock should seem so superior to the music now being made. Last year David Hepworth argued in *Uncommon People: The Rise and Fall of the Rock Stars* that traditional rock and roll is more or less dead, ruined by the digital consumer's privileging of the track over the artist. If the fan/star compact survives, it does so in the vast "heritage rock" market of classic album remasters, *Uncut* and *Mojo* magazines and tribute acts. You doubt that anyone will ever do for U2 what Rob Young has done for Can. On the other hand, the "death of rock" argument was going strong back in the days of James Callaghan's premiership and the IMF crisis, when I first became an *NME* kid.

DJ Taylor's novel "Rock and Roll is Life" is out now

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Songs of themselves

A wonderful memoir exposes the reality of the Indian caste system, finds *Gaiutra Bahadur*

As a graduate student newly arrived in the United States in 1990, Sujatha Gidla told a man at a bar that she was untouchable. His flirtatious response—"Oh, but you're so touchable"—captures the steep contrast between life as a Dalit in India and life as a South Asian woman in the US. (Dalit, which means "ground down" or "oppressed," has replaced untouchable as the term for a lower-caste person.)

Early in her remarkable family memoir, *Ants Among Elephants*, Gidla executes a shift in perspective just as sharp as her move from oppression in India to desirability in America. She begins by using the first person, with immediacy and warmth, but soon switches to the distancing third person to describe the sufferings of her family, caste and community in India. She swaps "I" for "Sujatha" or "Suja"—a change which speaks eloquently to the divided sense of self that persistent discrimination produces.

Gidla's book has won international acclaim since it was published last year in the US. After losing her job writing software code for the Bank of New York during the 2008 crisis, she became the first Indian woman to work as a conductor for the city's subway. Much of *Ants Among Elephants* was composed on her laptop during breaks and down-time from her job.

In order to explain the centuries-old Hindu caste system to a western audience, Gidla draws parallels with anti-black racism. She notes that caste, like colour, is an inescapable barrier, determined by birth and used to justify discrimination and segregation.

You could take her argument further. Dalit struggles for dignity and African-American battles for civil rights have inspired each other. BR Ambedkar, an important Dalit thinker and a minister in India's first post-independence government, explicitly allied the two causes. In a 1946 letter to the pioneering African-American intellectual WEB Du Bois, Ambedkar wrote: "there is so much similarity between the position of the untouchables in India and of the position of the Negroes in America that the study of the latter is not only natural but necessary." When the Indian Dalit Panthers were founded in 1972, they took their radical black counterparts as a model.

For both groups, centuries of contempt and systemic bias have led to psychological trauma. As Du Bois wrote in *The Souls of Black Folk*, the oppressed person suffers from a kind of "double consciousness"—African-Americans inevitably see themselves as their oppressors see them. *Ants Among Elephants* shows how this bifocal vision also applies to caste in the subcontinent.

The memoir's two primary subjects—her mother Manjula, and the Marxist poet and guerrilla leader KG Satyamurthy, who was Gidla's uncle—bear the marks of this damaged outlook. Originating in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, the siblings were more privileged than many in their caste. Born into a family of Christian converts, both had postgraduate degrees and lived in towns and cities outside their ancestral settlement—a ghetto on the village's outskirts. Yet their mobility and education painfully estranged them from their own background.

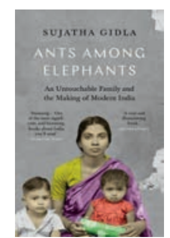
On Manjula's final day of college, a poorer Dalit classmate accused her of preferring to be friends with high-caste students. Manjula admitted the truth: "I do like *kammas* [members of a landlord caste] more. But I can't help it. I don't like poverty." Yet as an adult her dealings with higher castes were far from subservient. During an interview to become a college lecturer, Manjula responded with knife-like intelligence to the daunting panel of Brahmin professors. Asked to define democracy, she answered correctly but added that no real democracy yet existed anywhere in the world—including India.

Still, the internalised perception of being inferior was never banished. Manjula once tried to say thanks and goodbye to a Brahmin professor even though he had humiliated her in class. He wouldn't even let her into his house; she had to speak to him from outside his gate.

Gidla's radical uncle, nicknamed Satyam, is a singular figure. He saved a settlement of lepers from being evicted, robbed a rice lorry to feed the poor, joined the most radical wing of India's Communist Party and then critiqued it for caste prejudice. Yet even he was marred by the same double consciousness. As a young man, he was besotted with a fair-skinned upper-caste woman. When she made him visit her mansion via the back entrance, he rationalised her behaviour. "One has to respect other people's customs," Gidla writes, in the sarcastic tone that occasionally electrifies the book. Eventually, the woman tells him bluntly: "Your caste and my caste are not one… How in the world can there be anything between us?"

When Satyam married a cousin from his ancestral village, the wedding rituals exposed his alienation from his Christian Dalit roots. As an avowed Communist, he at first refused to marry in church. Then he denied his caste brothers the customary pig at the groom's wedding feast. Pigs symbolise filth to higher-caste Hindus, an attitude Satyam had absorbed. The bride's family served pig at their own feast, however, and Gidla's vivid description of the ritual chasing of the animal is perhaps the most evocative passage in the book. Echoing Dalit folk humour, Gidla draws an analogy between Indian pigs—scrawny, black-skinned, associated with muck and excrement—and Dalits. The hounded animal gets to look up at the sky right before being slaughtered, just like the impoverished Dalit whose suffering only abates at his life's end.

Ants Among Elephants works within the rhetorical tradition of Dalit memoirs, which first started appearing in the 1970s. They tend to downplay the narrator's individual quest for self-realisation—the usual memoir format—in favour of portraying the everyday realities of a group yet to be emancipated. These memoirs resemble ethnographies as much as they do autobiographies. The narrator bears witness to enduring injustices rather than singing a Whitmanesque "song of myself." This was true of the work of the former Catholic nun Bama, whose *Kurukku* was published in Tamil in the 1970s, and the Dalit feminist activist Urmila Pawar, whose *Aaidan* or *Weave of My Life* was published in English a decade ago. Gidla's vernacular style—earthy, direct, simple—also fits within the tradition of the Dalit memoir.



Ants Among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India
by Sujatha Gidla (Daunt Books, £14.99)

Opposite, left to right: Sujatha herself, her grandmother, father, brother, mother and sister

She does, however, depart from the conventions of the genre in significant ways. She provides both the heroic (her rebel uncle) and the quotidian (her mother's marriage and her hustle from job to job). While other Dalit memoirs move back and forth in time, Gidla sticks to a chronological narrative that proceeds "as though she were picking up beads and stringing them one by one on a long thread," as she describes her mother's storytelling style.

In the epilogue, when Gidla once more inhabits the "I" in her story, her own exceptional nature becomes clear. At 20, she was jailed for three months for protesting against an upper-caste professor at her engineering college who automatically failed Dalits. While she was locked up, the police beat her with sticks and ropes.

Her dalliance with rebellion provides clues for understanding the style of *Ants Among Elephants*. As a teenager in India, and as a member of the student wing of her uncle's left-wing party, she engaged in street theatre, performing songs and skits about unemployment and government corruption. This perhaps explains the fabular, oral quality of her account of a peasant uprising. She begins that entrancing passage like a perverse fairy tale, with a direct address: "O brother and sister, mother and father, this is the story of Telangana [a southern Indian state]."

© PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SUJATHA GIDLA

"Gidla had to leave India to see the tales of her family and caste as worthy of being told. Migrating gave her new eyes"

If Gidla's prose lurches at points, it does so with performative feints—as when she tells us that Satyam rescues his light-skinned beloved from a car accident only to reveal that it's a fantasy or when she tells us that he glimpses the woman nightmarishly morph into the lion statue at the front door of her house—an entrance barred to him. Gidla's tone is deliciously sardonic and deliberately scatological: "What grace! Its hind parts, the part the tail grows out of, the part the shit drops down from, moved along with the rest of its body. Whenever the lion moved, its ass moved, too. No, that was Satyam: he was the lion's ass." Aesthetically, the book is a jab in the eye to refined sensibilities.

For BR Ambedkar, emancipating women was critical to annihilating caste. As early as 1916, when he was a student at Columbia, he saw the control of women, biological as well as cultural carriers of caste, as key to maintaining this unjust system. Indeed, upper castes seeking to punish Dalits who transgress continue to mete out sexual violence against lower-caste women. As a woman in Anand Patwardhan's 2011 documentary *Jai Bhim Comrade* framed it, when she eloquently testified that she belonged to the "caste of woman," patriarchy in India is a parallel form of oppression profoundly interconnected with caste.

Women in Ambedkar's movement asserted their freedom by rewriting the lyrics of religious and folk songs into social protest anthems and by taking part in political theatre troupes. Orality was part of their arsenal. *Ants Among Elephants* reveals that before the arrival of Christian missionaries in Andhra Pradesh in the late 1800s untouchables were forbidden from learning to read and write. Caste taboo also effectively prohibited their public expression. Not only were they not to touch or be touched; they were also not supposed to speak.

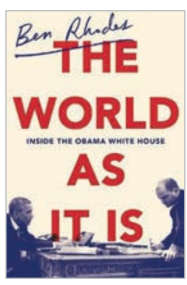
Gidla had to leave India to see the tales of her family and caste as worthy of being told. Migrating gave her new eyes. Those eyes also perceive the self-torture of educated Dalits who, having left villages where everyone knows their caste, lie about it. Locked into the attempt to pass as non-Dalit, they can never tell anyone their stories. As Gidla writes: "Your untouchable life is never something you can talk about." In this context, her own storytelling assumes special significance.

Ants Among Elephants gains much of its force from the critical lens with which Gidla views her father and her uncle. She is clear-eyed and sharp-tongued in rendering the flaws of these complex men, whom nevertheless she loved. Satyam the firebrand poet and freedom fighter is pampered, always shadowed by an assistant who clips his nails and shaves his beard; he chooses a wife who virtually becomes his domestic servant. Her father, an English lecturer, beats his wife whenever his authority is challenged or his masculine insecurities inflamed.

Tellingly, Gidla uses the first person point of view only once in the main body of the book, to recount an episode of domestic violence. Her father, angry that her mother is sleeping late, drags her out of bed by the hair, slaps her, and chases her naked around the courtyard. "The scene that day," Gidla writes, "is burned into Sujatha's—into my—memory." She owns the trauma. It is hers. Only the personal pronoun will do. P

Gaiutra Bahadur's "Coolie Woman" was shortlised for the Orwell Prize

Books in brief



The World As it Is: Inside the Obama White House

by Ben Rhodes (Bodley Head, £20)

There is a biographical detail about Ben Rhodes, the former foreign affairs adviser to Barack Obama, that his critics often mention: he has an MFA in fiction writing. This fact allows those critics—who range from Fox News types to Washington's foreign policy establishment—to dismiss Rhodes, and by extension Obama, as a mere storyteller, someone more interested in spinning a yarn than dealing with the harsh realities of a dangerous world.

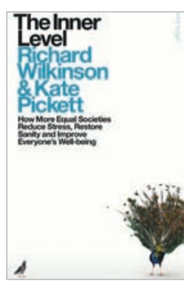
But as Rhodes's memoir of his eight years at the White House shows, storytelling plays a vital role in government. Obama used his speeches as a way of formulating his thoughts, painting the bigger picture that placed his day-to-day decisions in context. (Storytelling, it turns out, is pretty useful for authors too—this is that rare beast, an engaging and wonderfully written book on foreign policy.)

For all the discussion about America being the sole remaining superpower, Rhodes portrays a White House more often than not reacting to events, rather than leading them. He reminds us that the president is just one part of the US government's foreign policy apparatus. Time and again, Rhodes recalls how older—supposedly wiser—heads in the Pentagon and State Department tried to box Obama into a corner on Afghanistan (more troops), Egypt (support for Mubarak) and Iran (don't do a deal).

One constant theme is Obama's rising private anger at the way the right-wing media portray his presidency. "My being president appears to have literally driven some white people insane," he says, following the latest police shooting of an unarmed black man. Suffice it to say, his public remarks were very different.

If Obama is the story's star, Donald Trump is a looming off-stage presence. Trump's communication style is a little different from Obama's, but no less potent. Be thankful he doesn't have his own Rhodes.

Steve Bloomfield



The Inner Level

by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (Allen Lane, £20)

A decade of austerity hangs heavily over Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's follow-up to their successful 2009 book *The Spirit Level*. (Even David Cameron was a fan.) The authors' argument—that the gap between relative levels of income produces social problems we ignore at our peril—remains unacted on. This time round, in *The Inner Level*, the authors look at how such inequality affects what happens in our heads.

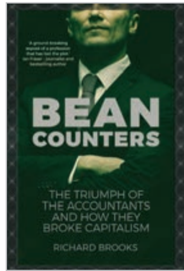
Boris Johnson might think that inequality is "essential for the spirit of envy and keeping up with the Joneses that is, like greed, a valuable spur to economic activity"; but in unequal societies, the authors believe, watchfulness and insecurity drive display and positioning over collaboration and sharing. This self-perpetuating cycle is creating a mental health crisis of depression and anxiety that people cannot resolve on their own.

As if embarrassed by the new clothes in which they have dressed their old argument, the authors are at pains to say that *The Inner Level* is not a self-help book. They are surefooted on class, social mobility and the fallacy of meritocracy. But their treatment of mental health never feels more than an original attempt to reaffirm the correctness of their thesis and comes close to accepting received wisdom—social media is about narcissism, consumerism is about status—rather than staking out a novel narrative.

Wilkinson and Pickett believe that only collective action can reduce inequality. Their concluding prescriptions are practically Bennite: levelling pre- and post-tax income; the development of more democratic business ownership; stronger social security protections; stronger unions; and the growth of ethical and co-operative enterprise.

The Inner Level is a battle-weary second attempt by Wilkinson and Pickett to reach a wider audience. It sets their well-rehearsed words to a new tune that, while more in keeping with current concerns, has the feeling at times of being sung through gritted teeth.

Mark Brown



Bean Counters

by Richard Brooks (Atlantic, £18.99)

There is an irony at the heart of *Private Eye* journalist Richard Brooks's improbably rollicking history of the accountancy profession. At its heart this is a plea for accountants to become boring again, and yet if accountancy was as boring as Brooks wants it to be, he could never have written such a good book about it.

Brooks traces accountancy from its birth during the Renaissance, through its Scottish adolescence, but the book really takes wing when it reaches the 1980s. As money dashed faster and faster around the world, the people tasked with keeping track of it became more powerful. That power brought wealth, and that wealth brought conflicts of interest. Those conflicts of interest knackered the world economy, and we're all living with the consequences.

Modern accountancy appeared in response to fraud. We needed disinterested professionals to check the numbers on company reports, to stop directors exploiting their power to enrich themselves. But, as the recent collapse of Carillion made clear (in case Enron, WorldCom, and the 2008 crisis hadn't already) something has gone horribly wrong.

In Brooks's telling, accountants have lost track of what they're supposed to be doing, and governments have indulged them. When accountancy firms ceased to be pure partnerships, and gained limited liability, their partners stopped fearing the consequences of their mistakes. When the big firms consolidated—the Big Eight became Six, then Five, and now Four—they became too big to jail. Only these global behemoths are big enough to understand the balance sheets of today's corporate giants, so we can't afford to lose any more of them. That means they can't be punished for their culpable mistakes.

His solutions to the crisis are simple and common sense. Any MP interested in making the City trustworthy again should take this book on their holidays.

Oliver Bullough

On Grand Strategy

by John Lewis Gaddis (Allen Lane, £25)

Drawing on Isaiah Berlin's famous 1953 essay "The Hedgehog and the Fox," John Gaddis, the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian of the Cold War, explains in this characteristically fascinating and important work, that "Hedgehogs… relate everything to a single central vision" through which "all that they say and do has significance." Foxes, by contrast, "pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some de facto way."

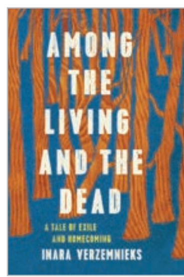
This idea serves as a core around which Gaddis builds his central theory in *On Grand Strategy*—a work that examines great historical figures from Xerxes, Pericles and Thucydides, to Elizabeth I and Franklin D Roosevelt in order to distil their accumulated wisdom into a coherent worldview.

Grand Strategy of the kind pursued here—which has become a serious business in academia, especially in the US—is essentially the study of the means that can and should be used to achieve long-term objectives, whether military or political. It is about how leaders and states can marshal economic resources, make alliances and fight wars that further their interests on a world stage.

The book, whose 10 chapters are based on a well-known course at Yale run by Gaddis, opens with the Persian king Xerxes attempting to invade Greece—against the advice of his minister Artabanus. As Gaddis notes: "Xerxes was right. If you try to anticipate everything, you'll risk not accomplishing anything. But so was Artabanus. If you fail to prepare for all that might happen, you'll ensure that some of it will." As we know, that expedition ended in disaster for the Persians.

Gaddis's answer to the problem of balancing attack and defence is that one must be both a hedgehog and a fox: in the words of F Scott Fitzgerald, we must have "the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." Only then can there be the correct "alignment of potentially unlimited aspirations with necessarily limited capabilities."

David Patrikarakos



Among the Living and the Dead

by Inara Verzemnieks (Pushkin, £16.99)

For someone exiled from their homeland, the past becomes an almost physical place. Inara Verzemnieks's memoir, a remarkable debut, considers the effect of forced exile on the elders of her family—the displacement of her Latvian grandmother Livija to America after the Second World War mirrored in her great-aunt Ausma's Soviet exile to Siberia.

As refugees, forced to abandon Riga while bombs dropped on the Latvian capital during the war, Livija and her husband Emils were unable to return to a country subsumed by the USSR. Instead, Livija travelled back through stories, told and retold to a young Verzemnieks, of Lembi, the bucolic farmhouse where she grew up, accompanying the cows to pasture, "toddling barefoot behind the slow-hoofed cortège."

Verzemnieks has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and here she applies a journalist's eye to her own family—tracking down and interviewing those still living in Latvia. In doing so she uncovers what was omitted from her grandmother's idyllic limbo, where "lilacs bloomed, regardless of the season."

What her grandmother left out includes a younger sister left behind and her husband's SS uniform—Verzemnieks identifies in her silence the shame of never being free "from the larger moral question of what constitutes collaboration."

On the one hand, writes Milan Kundera in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, (written in exile from Soviet-controlled Czechoslovakia), "we must never allow the future to collapse under the burden of memory." And yet, he notes elsewhere, "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Verzemnieks's wise book appreciates the tension between these two precepts.

Though at times tempted by the sentimental nostalgia she tries to complicate, Verzemnieks offers a deeply personal book, preserving stories that would otherwise have been forgotten.

Josie Mitchell

Patient X

by David Peace (Faber, £14.99)

"How can any of us escape this world of ours, except for faith, madness or death?" wonders the protagonist of David Peace's 10th novel, a fictional imagining of the life of Ryunosuke Akutagawa (1892-1927). Sometimes considered a Japanese cousin to Poe, Dostoevsky or Kafka, Akutagawa is probably best known in English for "In a Bamboo Grove," a modernist story of a murder reported from several perspectives that was filmed by Akira Kurosawa as *Rashomon*. But it's by no means the strangest of the stories and novels that he produced before killing himself at 35. Little wonder that Peace, a British writer living in Japan who is fascinated by prose experiment and psychological edge-states, should be so drawn to this dreamlike, violent and darkly funny body of work.

Patient X provides a fragmented glimpse into Akutagawa's self and world, using the signature techniques of Peace's fiction: second-person narration, incantatory repetition, a persistent blur between the real and the hallucinated. Readers of *The Damned United*, his flesh-creeping account of Brian Clough's tenure at Leeds United, will be on familiar ground; so will admirers of his Tokyo trilogy, set in the occupied Japanese capital after the Second World War whose final instalment arrives next year.

This book, however, feels like Peace's most deliberate and classical to date, a fact only partially explained by its Taisho-period (1912-26) setting. Akutagawa was a syncretist, both religious and literary; his writing yoked elements of Japanese folklore with satirical modern settings and European prose techniques, and he was fascinated by Asian interpretations of Christian doctrine. In this portrait, which swirls biography and fiction together and often uses the settings of the work as background to the life, he is a character of tragic poise and steely resolve, and the clangour of Peace's usual prose style abates accordingly. This is a haunted, haunting book; rigorous and powerfully strange

Tim Martin

Recommends

Art

Emma Crichton-Miller

Liverpool Biennial: Beautiful World, Where Are You?

Various locations, 14th July to 28th October

The UK's largest contemporary art festival this year takes its cue from a poem by Friedrich Schiller mourning the disappearance of the Greek gods in a turbulent age. The curators have invited 40 artists from 22 countries to make beauty their priority: whether it's Belgian artist Francis Alÿs's war paintings (see *Outskirts of Mosul*, below), works by indigenous artists, including Canadian Inuit Annie Pootoogook or a healing garden for Toxteth created by Algerian artist Mohamed Bourouissa. One highlight will be a new three-channel video installation by the great French New Wave filmmaker, 90-year-old Agnès Varda.

Rembrandt: Britain's Discovery of the Master

Scottish National Gallery, 7th July to 14th October

In 1629, Rembrandt's sombre but exquisite painting *The Artist's Mother* arrived in Britain, a gift to Charles I, sparking a craze for the Dutchman's work that has lasted nearly 400 years. This exhibition gathers together portraits, landscapes, prints and drawings by the master from all over Britain as well as those by artists he influenced. It will include two 1634 portraits of a Dutch couple living in Norfolk, the Rev Johannes Elison and his wife Maria Bockenolle.

Yves Klein

Blenheim Palace, 18th July to 7th October

Lying on a beach with friends in 1946, Yves Klein claimed the sky as his own. That infinite blue became his central subject and the intense ultramarine paint it inspired, trademarked International Klein Blue (IKB), his essential medium. This wild boy of French art, who died aged 34, would have been 90 this year. In his honour, Blenheim is mounting the most comprehensive exhibition of his work in the UK to date.

Theatre

Michael Coveney

The Lehman Trilogy

National Theatre, 4th July to 22nd September

The collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 is a distant catastrophe in this triptych by Stefano Massini. It tells the story of three mid-19th-century immigrant Jewish sons of a Bavarian cattle merchant who found the bank and become kings of Wall Street. The play, already seen in Paris and Milan, is newly adapted by Ben Power for director Sam Mendes. The brothers are played by Simon Russell Beale, Adam Godley and Ben Miles. American Express took over the bank in 1984 and the play moves quickly into a new era of financial speculation.

Barry Humphries' Weimar Cabaret

Barbican Theatre, 11th to 29th July

This is a welcome return for a revelatory cabaret from Barry Humphries, who discovered a lifelong passion for the banned songs of Nazi Germany—Korngold, Krenek, Kurt Weill and others—as a teenager in Melbourne. He shares his passion in a witty, sardonic commentary studded with music from slinky chanteuse Meow Meow (stand by for her "Sonata Erotica") and the Aurora Orchestra. The show was briefly in London and the Edinburgh Festival two years ago, so this is a rare opportunity to see it.

Home, I'm Darling

Theatr Clwyd, Mold, 25th June to 14th July

Laura Wade, author of the outrageous Bullingdon Club satire *Posh*, runs a fantastical 1950s variation on Jack Popplewell's *Darling, I'm Home*, a 1970s role-reversal comedy. Behind the gingham curtains being a domestic goddess turns out to be harder than it looks. And who wants to be a perfect housewife anyway? Bright spark Katherine Parkinson (above) leads Tamara Harvey's production, which moves into the National Theatre at the end of July.

Classical

Alexandra Coghlan

The Proms

London and beyond, 13th July to 8th September

It's a rich year for 20th-century music at the Proms with Bernstein, Debussy and Parry all featuring. Highlights are legion, including pianist Paul Lewis (who plays Beethoven's much-loved "Emperor" Concerto) and award-winning cellist Alisa Weilerstein, performing Shostakovich's First Concerto. There are Debussy tributes from Glyndebourne, who bring *Pelléas et Mélisande*, as well as Mark Elder and the Halle Orchestra who perform the sumptuous cantata *La Damoiselle élue*. But most exciting is an all-Beethoven concert from Teodor Currentzis and his period orchestra MusicaAeterna. This punky ensemble can startle the most familiar music into giving up new secrets. Not to be missed.

A Celebration of Peace

Ely Cathedral, 4th July

The centenary of the Armistie is the theme for an event at Ely cathedral. Stephen Cleobury directs a chorus of 250 singers from across America. They join the local East Anglia Chamber Orchestra for a programme of Vaughan Williams, which has the composer's plea for peace—*Dona Nobis Pacem*—at its heart, and includes his exquisite *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

Igor Levit

Symphony Hall, Birmingham on 19th July, Wigmore Hall, London on 21st July

He's in his early thirties, but Igor Levit has already been described by the *New York Times* as "One of the essential artists of his generation." The Russian-German pianist's intellect, breadth of repertoire and subtlety of touch all come together to create a supremely gifted artist. This eclectic programme—moving from Bach to Busoni via Wagner, Liszt and Schumann—should give a good sense of his musical scope.

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Film

Francine Stock

First Reformed

Released on 13th July

Forty-two years after his first original screenplay (*Taxi Driver* for Martin Scorsese), Paul Schrader directs his own script about another loner wrestling with evil. This time, though, it's a priest (lean and thoughtful Ethan Hawke) who must confront the crisis of a young environmentalist as well his own failing faith. Money, terrorism and eco-armageddon are debated in this unashamedly wordy drama, which still remains dynamic and strikingly sincere. It might be a tribute to Robert Bresson's classic *Diary of a Country Priest* but its aim at contemporary targets is true.

Generation Wealth

Released on 20th July

Lauren Greenfield began to photograph the affluent youth of Los Angeles a quarter of a century ago. Over the years, she's chronicled our growing obsession with status. Her previous documentary—*The Queen of Versailles*—was about a family building the biggest private home in the US. Now she's bringing the project to an end with a film about addiction to achievement. This could have been a smug poke at excess but Greenfield doesn't exclude from criticism her own obsessive way of working and the effect it's had on her family.

Leave No Trace

Released on 29th June

Marginalised people have long been the concern of writer/director Debra Granik. The subjects here are a traumatised military veteran (Ben Foster, above) and his adolescent daughter living wild and unnoticed in a park near Portland, Oregon. When they're finally detected, what's to be done if they don't want to integrate? Granik has found a great young actor in New Zealander Thomasin McKenzie. With a mix of professional and "natural" performers—and a profusion of nature—the film charts boundaries between independence and isolation. Quietly impressive.

Opera

Neil Norman

Falstaff

Royal Opera House, 7th to 21st July

Verdi's final opera, which distils Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* and the *Henry IV* plays, is a thing of raucous and tender beauty. Premiered in Milan in 1893, it was immediately hailed as a masterpiece. Robert Carsen's scintillating version, set in the 1950s, is a riot of colour. It takes a big man to inhabit the central role and they don't get much bigger than Bryn Terfel—opera's answer to Meatloaf—who has the voice and comedy chops to match. Carsen returns to direct while the orchestra is in the capable hands of Nicola Luisotti. Best news of all for equine-fanciers is the return of Rupert in the role of Louis the horse.

The Skating Rink

Garsington Opera, 5th to 16th July

Based on the novel by Roberto Bolaño, this new opera by librettist/playwright Rory Mullarkey and composer David Sawer is an enticing prospect. Combining a trio of love stories, thriller elements and real skating, it tells of Nuria, a beautiful skater, and the man obsessed with her. Nuria is sung by Australian soprano Lauren Zolezzi. Director and designer Stewart Laing makes his Garsington debut in this world premiere which might be subtitled "Murder on Ice."

Isabeau

Investec Opera Holland Park, 14th to 28th July

Pietro Mascagni's rarely performed opera receives a welcome revival at Holland Park in a new production with New York City Opera. Written in 1911 to a libretto by Luigi Illica, this adaptation of the medieval legend of Lady Godiva fuses the suspense and violence of *Cavalleria Rusticana* with delirious Wagnerian harmonies. Soprano Anne Sophie Duprels sings the title role.

Podcasts

Charlotte Runcie

Griefcast

Cariad Lloyd

In trying to understand death, you might as well listen to the thoughts of people who make jokes for a living. Comedian Cariad Lloyd has been running this podcast since 2016—interviewing fellow comedians and writers, such as Robert Webb, David Baddiel and Sara Pascoe—all sharing their experiences of bereavement and thoughts on "the weirdness of death and dying." It's earned a large cult following, and the tone is reflective but never mawkish, often melancholy and rather beautiful.

Happy Place

Fearne Cotton

After all that grief, *Happy Place* is a nice complementary chaser. As a spin-off from broadcaster Fearne Cotton's self-help books on positivity and mindfulness, the podcast is an interview series with an optimistic mental health angle and a warm atmosphere. Cotton talks in a relaxed, cosy style with guests including Kirsty Young, Stephen Fry, Tom Daley, Dawn French and Paloma Faith. The conversations tend to focus on the undulating nature of happiness, love, and relationships.

Slow Burn

Leon Neyfakh for Slate

In the Trump era, it sometimes feels as if we're living through another Watergate. But what did that scandal feel like at the time? *Slow Burn* tells the story in eight episodes as gripping as a psychological thriller. Though we know how it ends—with Nixon's sensational resignation—by focusing on key "players" in the drama and the context of American life at the time, host Leon Neyfakh makes it seem as though anything could have happened.

Life

Leith on language

Sam Leith

Porcine political put-downs

"Daddy, daddy," your children will one day ask, "what did you do in the gammon wars?" Each generation has its time of trial. And for this one, it is the great debate over whether "gammon"—a Corbynite slur aimed at the sort of hypertensive white man in late middle age whose angry Brexit face is to be seen in the audience at *Question Time*—is, as some claim, racist; or, as others claim, classist; or, as its users claim, no more than a woundingly spot-on description of the skin tone of an enraged *Daily Mail* reader.

Nice to meet a food-based term of abuse. There aren't many. Mad people are "nuts." Bad films are "cheesy" or "schmaltzy." "Coconut" has had some purchase in the racial arena. "Watermelon" (green on the outside, pink on the inside) is sometimes used to troll eco-lefties. Your grandmother might have called you a "silly 'nana" on the grounds that bananas are intrinsically amusing. But I can't think of many others.

Is "gammon" racist? We can leave aside the old argument about whether reverse-racism is a thing. There isn't much of a lexicon of black-on-white deprecation in the UK—you'll find "honky" and "cracker" in the US, but we have no equivalents. And here, anyway, is a term of abuse used towards white people by (predominantly) other white people. Rather, it's racism—if that's the word—directed by white people at pink people. "Pink" not being a race, the jury continues to deliberate, settling on the lesser indictment of appearance-based insult.

A stronger line of attack is that it's a class-based slur. But it's not clear which class. Depending on which gammon-deprecator you talk to, it's a sneer against *Top-Gear*-watching lower-middle-class provincial men in a uniform of "boot-cut jeans, loafers and an open-collared white polyester shirt"; or claret-faced members of the gin-and-jag belt to be found holding forth at the 19th hole in Henley or Tunbridge Wells. The gammon—as a stereotype for a particular sort of reactionary—crosses psephological categories as does reaction itself.

What's peculiarly effective about the insult is that, though its denotative aspect refers to no more than skin colour, its connotations richly increase its aptness. Could there be a more Brexity foodstuff? Gammon, whether served with a glutinous ring of tinned pineapple or a slick of parsley sauce, is a token of all that is dowdy and post-war and pre-gastropub. It's a metonym for the 1950-70s world to which gammons, caricaturally, wish to return us. And there's the cleverness: "gammon" straddles the class divide between the blazer-wearing home counties golf Nazi and what a colleague calls the "estuarine prole." Here is alike the remembered food of the minor public school, and the menu staple of the down-at-heel boozer in the unloved seaside town.

Its meaning is complexly enough determined, indeed, that it will support earnest *Guardian* articles in its defence by Owen Jones ("'Gammon' is punching up," he writes, "in a way that, say, 'chavs' is punching down.") Yet that is slightly beside the point. Like all effective insults, it feeds on the rage it provokes in its victims. It's ugly and childish and that is what the gammon-callers like about it.

Such insults aren't subject to ideological vetting. The best we can perhaps do, given its Little Englander connotations, is to check its passport. It has stamps going back to the Conquest, being as any fule kno a loan-word from the French *gambon* via the Anglo-Norman. And as an insult, notes the OED, it has history "in various parasynthetic adjectives referring to particularly reddish or florid complexions," from 1604 ("The sallo-westfalian gamon-faced zaza cries stand out") to 2004, when the *Observer* called Rupert Lowe "The gammon-cheeked Southampton chairman."

So unusually, then, we see an insult that has been wandering in a Platonic half-light, waiting for a modern meaning to be applied to it. We are taking back control of our invective at least.

Life of the mind

Anna Blundy

The weight of the world

I started putting on weight during my second analysis seven years ago. At first this felt like progress—I wasn't trying to be perfect anymore. I was beginning to be happier in my skin, not worried about how I appeared in the anyway creepy male gaze. I thought I was accepting my femininity and allowing myself to be softer in a literal as well as a psychological sense. Then my analyst asked if my eating felt "out of control." Oh, here we go, I thought. He is a man, as are all three doctors who have felt free to advise me to lose weight. I should stress that I wasn't ever fat in a "pass this to the fat, blonde lady over there," kind of way. Just podgy.

Unhappy women so often seem to be obsessed with their bodies. Female patients use their bodies as a canvas on which to express their distress. An early patient of mine lifted her t-shirt mid-session to show me an appalling map of scars, scratches and an open wound. It is shocking to hear about the endless diets and the absurd rules for appearing attractive to horrible men, the cutting and biting and the enthusiastic self-mutilation via ostensibly beautifying surgery and treatments. Addiction to "enhancing" surgical procedures is, of course, an addiction to self-harm.

The thinking is that women's bodies equal mother, so women take their mother issues out on their own bodies and men take their mother issues out on women's bodies. Though an over-simplification, it explains why female bodies are subject to so much negative and positive attention.

Another patient who self-harms speaks to her mother regularly by telephone—it took us a year to work out that she does it during (!) or immediately after these calls. Years in, she is much better and lately reported an irritated conversation with her Mum. "Instead of internalising it I actually snapped at her and told her I had to go because I was late for work." Yes!

The same patient grew up with a father who "had an eye for the ladies" and "was a ladies' man," that is, wanting to have sex with some but denigrating those that did

not meet his unconsciously imposed standards for attractiveness and sexual availability (ie his daughters). It is unsettling to realise that men who claim they love women usually just mean they see women in a certain age range as potential sex toilets.

That's not to say that men don't self-harm, but the endless nightmare of men's use and abuse of women's bodies is a problem on a far bigger scale. Psychoanalyst David Morgan: "In an uncaring neo-liberal, Matrix-like world where the humanity of the world is reduced to cheap labour and commodified, the hatred of the lack of maternal function in a cruel commodity-driven world is taken out on women as the unwitting containers for the lack of containment that the world as bad container fails to provide." So women, the perceived carers, are attacked for the uncaring failings of the modern (and probably ancient) world.

When I make baklava and go back for a second (oh, let's face it, fourth) portion, am I self-harming, self-caring, enjoying my food or not giving a shit? (Filo pastry brushed with butter, crushed nuts with cinnamon and sugar, layered, baked for 15 minutes then soaked in honey, orange juice, rosewater syrup—easy).

I'll let you know when I've finished it.

Matters of taste

Wendell Steavenson

Riches of the poor

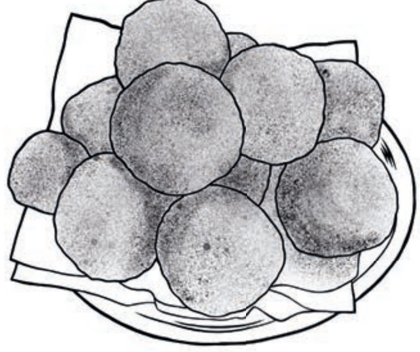
In April I went to Palermo. It was my first time in the city and I walked and walked, exploring the streets and alleys that opened into unexpected piazzas overhung with baroque façades, wondering and marvelling at the disregarded, casual, astonishing beauty of the stones and pillars and cupolae and marble nymphs cavorting in the fountains.

Sunlight slanted through flags of washing strung along the balconies and shone on a blissful Madonna looking down on a scrim of graffiti, overflowing rubbish bins and a grandmother in black stockings hefting a plastic bag of tomatoes. Joy: I had arrived at peak artichoke season, the plant piled up abundantly in acanthus mountains on flatbed trucks, in shopping trolleys, on trestle tables.

In the market that runs like a spine through Ballarò—possibly the coolest neighbourhood in the world, with its mix of Mafia, migrant and hipster—I bought artichokes still hot from the grill and crunched through their charred leaves into the squishy khaki heart. A slab of *sfincione*, thick spongy pizza with a smear of tomato on top, made a very good breakfast. Mid-morning snack stop at the *friggitoria* cart for *panelle*, a square of deep-fried chickpea batter or perhaps a potato *crocchè*, sparked up with mint.

The frying vendors stood beside big tubs of hot oil ready to refry any combination of zucchini, calamari and splayed sardines, to be eaten from a paper wrapper. Palermo is full of street food: paper plates of marinated anchovies, purple boiled octopus, snails with garlic, vats of beef spleen swimming in lakes of lard and spooned into soft hamburger buns for an unctuous belly-patting sandwich.

I bought a bunch of dried oregano, two kilos of tomatoes, a plastic basket of warm fresh ricotta, a loaf of ciabatta, a bottle of olive oil and a jar of salted capers. Picnic on the balcony of my Airbnb apartment watching the mountains glow sapphire in the dusk, listening to the shouts and cheers echoing along the alley every time a goal



was scored in a football match on television. Soft curd clouds of ricotta, sublime, infinitesimally salty-sweet-funky-sour. The acid pulp of tomato crackled with salty-salt bitter caper. The olive oil trickled green astringency. It was an entirely perfect supper.

The next evening, still full after a giant lunch of *sarde e beccafico*—sardines stuffed with breadcrumbs, raisins and pine nuts followed by a rich black swirl of *pasta alla seppia*, with cuttlefish and ink, I went to my balcony again. The bread was stale and so I poured a little water on it, sloshed with oil, brightened the tomato with a few drops of vinegar and threw in capers. I realised I had unwittingly made *panzanella*. If Italian cuisine is simplicity, then in Sicily the principle is pared down further, frugality.

Cucina povera translates literally as "kitchen of the poor." As much as Sicilian cuisine is rich with the eastern Mediterranean flavours of sweet and sour *agro dolce*—raisins, apricot, almond and pistachio—its dishes are also influenced by the fact that it is the poorest region of Italy where rural feudalism persisted well into the 20th century and unemployment stands at 22 per cent. *Pesto Trapanese* is made with almonds instead of expensive pine nuts and filled out with crushed tomato; dried chili is routinely used instead of exotic black pepper from Asia, fried breadcrumbs, *pangrattato*, are sprinkled on a pasta in lieu of pricy parmesan.

I made my humble bread and tomato salad again and again. The balance between salt and acid was different every time I tinkered, never boring, always soundly delicious. I drank the dregs like soup, reminded of tiger milk at the bottom of a ceviche. The addition of plain water seemed to bring everything together with a clean brightness, far less oily than salad dressing.

Water, we forget sometimes, is an essential ingredient and the simplest and cheapest of all. Neapolitan fishermen cooked their catch in seawater with a few tomatoes, the precursor of the dish called *aquapazza*, or crazy water. Think how the addition of starchy pasta water makes a sauce creamy without cream. And what is more refreshing than a lemon granita—essentially nothing much more than flavoured ice?

Palermo reminded me that being poor does not mean you need to eat poorly. Local, seasonal, fresh is the obvious triumvirate of cheap and good. Sicilians eat lots of grains—spaghetti, bread—and dishes that are heavy on the veg, with just a very little fish or meat added for savour. The best pasta I ate in Sicily was tossed with a single flaked-apart sardine and tangled through with strands of wild fennel that grows freely over road verges in springtime.

And Palermo must be the capital of fried leftovers: *arancine*, (Sicilians like to point out the distinction from the Italian *arancina*) are big balls of rice stuffed with whatever can be scrounged: provolone cheese, peas, the tail end of a ragù. A Senegalese cook I met had even made them with *mafea*, the African spicy peanut sauce. Nothing is wasted, yesterday's spaghetti mixed with beaten egg makes a pasta frittata, morsels of leftover *crocchè* and *panelle* dough is scraped off the hot griddle and refried into *rascatura*.

Back home I am still eating bread and tomato salad for lunch every day instead of buying a sushi box. Old limp broccoli, a frozen cube of chicken stock, a sludge of tomato sauce from last week's pasta, a handful of *pastatini* makes minestrone in minutes. I treasure odds and ends and especially the delicate lacy nibble of the crispy-hot frying-pan edge of anything refried.

The most celebrated dish at Osteria Francescana in Modena, several times at the top of the World's 50 Best Restaurants List, is "the crunchy part of the lasagna" an elevated deconstructed version of this homely culinary moment that will cost you €250 as part of the tasting menu.

Wine

Barry Smith

The last drop

If you could choose your last bottle of wine, what would it be? A tough question that became a reality for one member of my family many years ago. Tom, a lawyer in his early sixties, developed an inoperable brain tumour. Still quite well when given this terrible news, he knew that he faced a rapid decline. Tom loved cigars, wine and his home city of Edinburgh with its historic ties to claret. He decided to do the things he wanted to do, which included savouring an exceptional bottle of Château Margaux.

Tom invited my father to an Edinburgh restaurant and they dined together, choosing from the list a magnificent bottle of this precious Bordeaux. I never learned what vintage it was; I wish I had. The two talked openly about what was to come. My father was no stranger to medical treatment, having survived an early brush with lung cancer. Perhaps that's why Tom sought him out for the occasion. Or, perhaps it was because my father, a restaurateur, was at home with the great wines of France. I was midway through my university training, but I found this event profoundly moving and it left its mark on me that Tom chose Château Margaux as his last wine.

I always wanted to taste a Margaux, to share in Tom's joy in life. It was my 40th birthday in Paris when I had the opportunity. I remember lingering over the last sip of the 1986.

Corinne Mentzelopoulos, the Greek owner of Château Margaux, once wrote about a storm that hit the Margaux commune. In the dark and rain, lightning struck the trees—but it never touched the part of the vineyard where the best vines were planted. "They knew a thing or two, the ancients," she wrote.

I think, too, of the stories of Margaux's great vintages, of the glory of 1945 when those who toiled among the vines at harvest must have felt the surge of relief and joy at the end of the war. And I think of the story of Robert Parker, the wine critic, being asked to taste two bottles of 1900 Margaux at the Chateau to reassure a billionaire who wanted to buy the rest for a millennium dinner. Parker pronounced them in good condition: and with still some way to go.

I love the idea of uncovering wines made with love and care by the now long-dead. With each sip, we celebrate the people who made this possible.

It was only a few years ago that I had the extraordinary good fortune to be invited to a dinner at the Fat Duck restaurant where Paul Pontellier, the gifted wine maker at Château Margaux, was presenting his wines to complement a dinner created specially for the occasion. The wines included the 1985, 89 and 93 along with more recent vintages. The chief sommelier, Isa Ball, had proposed tasting the older vintages first so that as the dishes got bolder in their flavours they did not overwhelm the older wines.

Pontellier was sceptical initially but willingly conceded that it was the right decision. After dinner and I had the opportunity to talk to him then, about the wines and about the seasons at Margaux. He was extremely gracious and offered to show me around the winery if I cared to visit.

Just a few short years later he was dead. It was a shock to everyone in the world of wine and especially to his friends and colleagues in Bordeaux. These are moments of sadness and yet they help us to recognise the greatness of these wines and how they touched people's lives.

We will remember them.

DIY investor

Andy Davis

Buy buy, Britain

For the past few months, I've included a suggestion with this column for an area of the market or an asset that looks out of favour and that might be due a turnaround. But all the while I've been running this little experiment it has become harder to escape the impression that, as far as the rest of the world is concerned, the entire UK stock market has become just about the biggest turn-off they can think of.

Britain has been out of favour with international investors since the Brexit vote, thanks to the pound's immediate slide, weaker economic growth and uncertainty over future trading arrangements, to name just a few factors. At the time, the vote caused stock markets to rise, as most companies in the FTSE100 earn income in other currencies, which rose in value against the pound.

But two years on from the referendum, it seems the country has achieved such widespread unpopularity that opportunists are starting to talk about it as a contrarian buy. This tends to happen when the value of an asset has fallen so far that people believe all the bad news must already be "in the price." The conclusion often rests on decent foundations—being bearish about the UK is now an extremely "crowded trade" and once there is no one left to turn pessimistic, a reversal of sentiment becomes more likely.

I've seen various ways of expressing the depth of negativity about the UK market. One recent piece of American commentary pointed out that when investors turn negative on a country's equity market, they will sell their shares in the index funds that track that market. Unless there are other buyers, for those shares, they can be cancelled, reducing the number in circulation. One large UK equity fund has seen around a quarter of its shares cancelled since early March.

Almost irrespective of how you measure it, then, the British stock market is unloved among international investors. For UK investors, however, the suggestion that our stock market is now so far out of fashion among the available global choices that it represents a contrarian buying opportunity should be welcomed.

In practice we have little choice but to put the bulk of our money into UK assets, given that we need to generate returns in sterling in order to pay for most of the things we are saving for, such as our living costs in retirement.

Putting more cash into overseas stock markets in search of better returns means taking on more currency risk, which can easily backfire, as foreign investors in UK assets were reminded when sterling crashed on the referendum result.

Although the UK's transition from unpopular to "contrarian buy" does not mean that the picture is about to change imminently, it does suggest to me that this might be a worthwhile time to go against the consensus and become a buyer.

Hidden gems

There aren't many listed utility companies left in the UK thanks to takeovers, and those that remain have been under pressure. Shares in many are down 20 per cent or more on a year ago but started to recover in March. A tempting sign for contrarians?

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Policy report: Manufacturing

Britain must do more to boost its manufacturing sector. But what? Should government encourage innovation—or is the real problem the financial sector's failure to lend? And if Britain were to start churning out huge amounts of high-end manufactured goods, who would buy them all?

Britain's 3D future

Alan Mak

At an automated Adidas plant in Germany, 3D printing, otherwise known as additive manufacturing, is changing the way manufacturing works. Adidas can now shift production from the cheap Asian outsourcers to plants closer to its key consumer markets. As a result, the company can react quickly to changing demand.

3D printing is a valuable source of low-volume, high-value production. GKN Aerospace recently signed an agreement to print aircraft parts in titanium. The hope is to halve assembly time and slash waste material by up to 90 per cent. Imagine if clicking a mouse caused a product to be made locally then delivered to your door.

Manufacturing in the UK is well placed to take advantage of these changes. In 2017 the sector marked the longest continuous expansion for almost 50 years, buoyed by an upturn in orders from continental Europe and the relative weakness of sterling.

The advances in manufacturing are part of a wider trend of industrial digitisation, something that will impact all sectors of the economy. But as the Made Smarter UK review, led by Jürgen Maier, CEO of Siemens UK, made clear, Britain needs a coherent national strategy to embrace this revolution. It concludes that £455bn of growth in UK manufacturing is possible over the next decade, creating a net gain of at least 175,000 jobs, leading to a reduction in CO2 emissions of 4.5 per cent. These figures should focus minds in Whitehall, and in businesses around the country.

"The review concludes that £445bn of growth in UK manufacturing is possible over the next decade, creating 175,000 jobs"

I have long argued for stronger national leadership on this issue, and called for government and industry to work together to create a national strategy for Britain's future. Jürgen Maier's proposal to create a national "Made Smarter UK Commission" with a chair from industry and a ministerial co-chair, is exactly the kind of public-private collaboration we need. The government should ensure that such a minister is also given lead responsibility for co-ordinating all policy relating to future manufacturing technology across all Whitehall departments.

Britain has to act quickly if we want to take full advantage of this revolution. Other countries are already pressing ahead with national initiatives to encourage early adoption of these technologies, and investing heavily in research and development (R&D).

From creating a new and more integrated network of innovation centres and national research institutes, to reforming our education and skills system, to targeted investments and other measures to boost R&D, we have much to do to keep Britain abreast of this new "Fourth Industrial Revolution."

Digitisation of our industrial base is an economic imperative for Britain. If we can rise to these challenges—and the government has rightly signalled its intention to do so—then we can expect resurgent economic growth, rising productivity, greater choice for consumers and rising profits for businesses.

Only by seizing this opportunity can we turbo-charge Britain's industrial strength, delivering a growing economy, and a new era of cleaner, smarter economic growth.

Alan Mak MP is Conservative MP for Havant and Founder Chair of the APPG on the Fourth Industrial Revolution

A pair of Adidas trainers—the soles were made by 3D printing

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Today's Manufacturing Workforce Challenge

Talented people are the backbone of every successful business. As the UK faces up to potentially dramatic changes in its economic landscape and the risks and opportunities that flow from new technologies, it has never been more important for manufacturing companies to have access to a sustainable supply of recruits with the right skills and to develop their current workforce with the skills necessary to translate business strategy into the healthy returns that fuel our prosperity.

But in manufacturing there's a problem. The UK faces a critical shortfall in the supply of the engineering skills our businesses need. According to EEF research, 73% of manufacturers say they struggle to recruit skilled people and that access to technical skills is a particular challenge. Their experience is borne out by the research. Engineering UK's 2016 report points to an annual shortfall of 29,000 people with level 3 skills and 40,000 with level 4+ skills and doubts our education system will be able to meet forecast demand for skilled engineers and technicians by 2022. If UK manufacturers are to succeed in fiercely competitive global markets, we need a solution that not only responds to the current backlog of demand but can meet future needs more effectively by re-training our current workforce and bringing people with the right skills into the recruitment marketplace when and where our employers need them.

Government action on skills provides a partial solution. It addresses pre-existing and underlying low levels of employer interest and engagement in developing (as opposed to hiring) a skilled workforce. The Apprenticeship Levy has stimulated some change in company behaviours – although arguably not for the long tail of smaller businesses which continue to struggle to navigate a complex skills system. Local skills panels will provide an improved platform for engagement and to influence funding that addresses historical under-investment in the 'means of skills delivery' at the local level. All of this is welcome, but until we take a more national and connected view of manufacturing skills needs – and how best to fulfil them – there remains a very real risk that we will fail to deliver the workforce our manufacturing employers need.

A nation-level perspective will allow us to direct attention and resources in the most effective and efficient ways to meet those needs, reaping potential economies of scale and driving best practice across delivery channels and locations. The High Value Manufacturing Catapult, other Catapults and RTOs are uniquely positioned to take a view on the impact of emerging technologies to feed into national and local skills strategies. Greater collaboration across multiple education and training providers is required to improve national 'training productivity' for the development of courses and their delivery to a common standard and with high quality across the UK. As well as providing greater financial viability, this will reduce lead times to deploy new training offers to meet local employer need from nationally available resources, suitable for both new learners and re-training.

Delivery of advanced manufacturing skills that enable UK industry to successfully exploit new technologies are an essential pillar of Industrial Strategy and fundamental to the mission of Catapults and RTOs. To answer this manufacturing skills challenge, we require a systematic approach to education and skills, technologies and supply chains, local and national workforce needs, with all their complex connections and dependencies that have hindered previous isolated initiatives. The High Value Manufacturing Catapult is well placed to assist with the joining-up of many of these elements and to leverage the UK's substantial investment in manufacturing technologies within its existing centres. This would deploy the latest manufacturing research in support of a reformed education and training system for advanced manufacturing sectors and will enable the wider skills network to respond to employers' needs for a skilled workforce that underpins future UK industrial success.

Image courtesy of the Manufacturing Technology Centre

We need slow money

Chi Onwurah

Britain is built on industry. As a girl growing up in Newcastle, it was the greats of our industrial past, Stephenson, Parsons—that's Rachel Parsons, the first woman naval engineer and founder of the Women's Engineering Society—and Armstrong who inspired me to study electrical engineering.

So while I was at university it was dispiriting to hear Margaret Thatcher announce that our future was services, that we would let the world be our workshop and keep our hands clean. That cost 2m jobs and a fifth of the UK's manufacturing capacity in the 1980s alone. Today, only 2.9m people work in the manufacturing sector, compared to 8.9m 50 years ago.

As UK manufacturing declined, services expanded as a share of GDP, particularly finance. Since Thatcher's "big bang" of deregulation in 1986, the growth of finance has outstripped all other UK sectors, and as a percentage of GDP our financial sector is now larger than that of any other G7 economy. We are now a financialised economy, with two main consequences according to leading economist Mariana Mazzucato.

The first is that the financial sector has stopped resourcing the real economy—instead of investing in companies which produce "stuff," finance is financing finance. Why lend money to a manufacturer which may take years to make a profit or fail entirely when you can make a bet on some options hedged with other options and virtually guarantee a return in a few weeks? I was given an example of this by the owner of a medium-sized manufacturing business. He had been denied a loan for new equipment that would have boosted productivity. The reason? The equipment had no resale value if the company went bust. The bank would lend based on liquidation value, but not on the value of the living business.

The second consequence of an over-financialised economy is how it changes the motives behind economic activity. In this environment, investors with short-term interests tend to have more control over firms. This results in less reinvestment of profits and rising debt which make industry even more prone to short-term thinking. So this kind of finance changes the nature of what it finances.

This was seen recently when the "turnaround company" Melrose took over the British manufacturing firm GKN. Hedge funds held 20 per cent of GKN's shares and when shareholders voted on whether or not to approve the deal, they accepted it by 52 per cent to 48 per cent. The vote was essentially a referendum about the time horizons of a key British firm, and Britain lost.

To build a more prosperous economy we need to invest in it. Only in this way can we deliver jobs in towns and rural areas as well as our cities, and create value which is shared by all, not just those with the financial, social or cultural capital to enjoy it.

Labour has laid out plans for achieving this. We will reform our economic model, cultivating new models of ownership and providing patient, long-term finance for British businesses with our £250bn network of regional investment banks. We want to strengthen the government's powers to protect British economic assets when they are at risk of takeover.

"It was dispiriting to hear Margaret Thatcher announce that our future was services, the world would be our workshop"

We can reinvent the manufacturing sector, unlock productivity and create growth. But to do this we need to turn the tide of financialisation—and this is what Labour's industrial strategy is engineered to do.

Chi Onwurah is Labour MP for Newcastle Central and Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy, Science and Innovation

A false choice

Jay Elwes

Britain needs to rely less on services, especially on its financial sector, and boost manufacturing output. That is the combined message of the columns above, from politicians at different ends of the spectrum, which between them form a neat summary of the received wisdom that's dominated since the financial crisis of 2008. Two questions follow from this: first, is it realistic for an economy like Britain's to change course in such a dramatic way? And second, if Britain starts churning out high-end manufactured products, who's going to buy them all?

On the first question, as Chi Onwurah points out, the balance of Britain's economy has shifted before, most markedly during the '70s and '80s, when the UK's industrial base went into decline, unable to compete with cheap foreign imports. At the same time, financial deregulation and the liquidity of the eurodollar markets caused the City to surge.

This rebalancing towards services, though welcomed and encouraged by Thatcher's government, derived much of its force from international circumstances, without which they would have been much harder to achieve. So yes—broad structural economic reform can be done, but basing it on domestic considerations alone can be pretty tricky.

To see how tricky, look at China, which is trying to shift its economy from low-end manufacturing and exports towards a model based on internal demand and consumption. Beijing is having some success in this, but it's been tough going. Old economic models die hard, even in authoritarian states like China. An open economy like Britain's would find such far-reaching change hard to enact.

And even if an adjustment from services towards manufacturing were possible in Britain, would it be desirable? After all, the City—both pinnacle and pariah of the UK services sector—sends £60bn in tax revenues to the Treasury each year. The country can't afford to lose any part of that money.

It would be nice if, as Onwurah suggests, the banks could lend more to small manufacturers, even perhaps those without assets to put up as security. In early June, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that manufacturing output in Britain was declining at its fastest rate for over a decade. That, it said, was due to falling investment—the City could no doubt help on that front. But if the banks are to change their lending criteria, then financial regulators will need to relax rules that were tightened in the aftermath of the financial crisis to prevent precisely this sort of easy lending. The arguments against unshackling the banks remain strong.

Part of the decline in manufacturing output, the ONS also noted, was due to cooling international investment spending, and this brings us to the second question: if Britain makes more stuff, who's going to buy it all? Alan Mak cites a Siemens report that expects almost half a trillion pounds-worth of economic growth linked to manufacturing in the next decade. But that surely presupposes huge new trade deals, brokered at a time when the international climate is tilting sharply against global free trade. The diplomatic catastrophe of the June G7 made the extent of that dislocation brutally clear.

The perhaps unpopular conclusion from this is that a large services component in the economy could prove a useful hedge against this brewing protectionism. So perhaps the "either/or" attitude to services and manufacturing is all wrong. Better instead to go for both at once—they are not mutually exclusive, after all. And if manufacturing in Britain does grow to the extent that Mak suggests, that will only be because customers can be found with money to spend. At the moment it's not clear where those customers are, or whether they actually exist. P

Jay Elwes is Executive Editor of Prospect

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As a magazine of ideas, with a remit to shape political debate, *Prospect* relies on expert contributors, drawn from business, politics and academia. Our events explore the ideas behind the government policies that shape the world in which we live.

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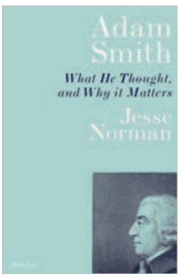
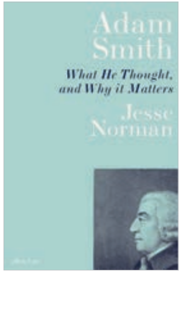
Visit our 2017 party conference hub to see details of our previous event programme:
prospectmagazine.co.uk/sponsored/2017conferences

Keep up-to-date by following the *Prospect* events team: **@Prospect_events**

Events

prospectmagazine.co.uk/events

The *Prospect* Book Club meets every third Monday of the month (excluding bank holidays) at 6.30pm at 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AA. To book tickets please visit prospectmagazine.co.uk/events

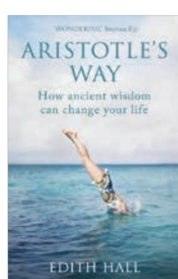



Monday 16th July

Jesse Norman
Adam Smith: What He Thought and Why it Matters

Adam Smith is still the most influential economist who ever lived. But what he really thought and what the implications of his ideas are remain fiercely contested. Jesse Norman, both a writer and a government minister, explores Smith's work as a whole and traces his influence over the past two centuries, showing us how he can help us solve the problems of modern capitalism and society.

Please note, there is no Book Club in August



Monday 17th September

Edith Hall
Aristotle's Way

Aristotle is possibly the greatest philosopher of all time—certainly he is the most influential. The big question he asked was how we are to lead a meaningful and happy life. In her new book, Edith Hall outlines 10 practical lessons in life we can learn from Aristotle, ranging from how to choose a partner to dealing with death. *Aristotle's Way* is not about applying rules but engaging with the real world armed with ideas. Hall, a professor at King's College, London, is the first woman to have won the Erasmus Medal of the European Academy and can be heard regularly on Radio 4.

Ways With Words
Festivals of Words and Ideas

Words and Ideas, poetry and discussion from 6th to 16th July

Like-minded and curious individuals gather at the beautiful location of Dartington Hall in Devon at the height of summer for Ways With Words annual festival of Words and Ideas.

Sameer Rahim, *Prospect*'s Managing Editor, will be chairing two events on the first weekend of Ways With Words:

Ferdinand Mount, Friday 6th July
Ferdinand Mount, former editor of the *TLS* and Margaret Thatcher adviser, launches the festival with his polemical take on what great thinkers, orators and politicians—including Thomas Jefferson and Gandhi—have got wrong.

Tariq Ali, Saturday 7th July
Journalist, historian, film-maker and political activist Tariq Ali revisits the events of 1968 and maps the effects of that radical time on today's society and the current political landscape.

For tickets and enquiries call 01803 867373 or www.wayswithwords.co.uk

Daily Mail
CHALKE VALLEY HISTORY FESTIVAL
25th June-1st July

Brexit: In the light of its past, is Britain ready?

The *Prospect* debate

With only nine months to go until the United Kingdom officially leaves the European Union, Brexit remains top of the agenda and deeply divisive. In our annual *Prospect* debate, this distinguished panel will debate historical precedents and whether or not Britain is prepared for an uncertain future.

Andrew Adonis and Afua Hirsch versus
Michael Gove and Robert Tombs

Chair: **Tom Clark**

Hiscox Tent, Sunday 1st July, 11.30am-12.45pm

To book your ticket please visit:
www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/events/chalke-valley-history-festival-2018

Is it time for a new economics?

Wednesday 4th July, 6.30-8pm, *Prospect* offices

No discipline is more influential over public policy. Ten years on from the crash, reflective economists have accepted the need for fresh thinking, but it can be hard to move on from old theories. The fierce arguments around Howard Reed's provocative *Prospect* essay, "Creative destruction," revealed passionate arguments about whether or not the reboot has gone far enough.

Join *Prospect*'s Editor Tom Clark and a panel of experts to discuss what economics can teach us, and what it still has to learn.

Prospect Behind the headlines:

Cambridge Analytica

Monday 2nd July, 6.30-8pm, *Prospect* offices

Our lives are increasingly being shared and acted out online. Our digital footprint and data we create have become increasingly valuable. The recent Facebook and Cambridge Analytica revelations have raised key issues relating to privacy, and how we can better hold social media companies to account.

Confirmed speakers include: *Prospect* contributor James Ball; Brexit whistleblower Shahmir Sanni, Former Secretary of BeLeave and Vote Leave volunteer.

Prospect *"in conversation"*

Jay Elwes speaks to George Magnus

Tuesday 30th October, 6.30-8pm, *Prospect* offices

Join Jay Elwes, Executive Editor at *Prospect* Magazine and George Magnus, associate at Oxford University's China Centre and a senior economic adviser to UBS Investment Bank, to discuss China's evolving economic relationships, the sustainability of Xi Jinping's regime, and what a conflict-happy Trump might mean for China's future should a trade war occur.

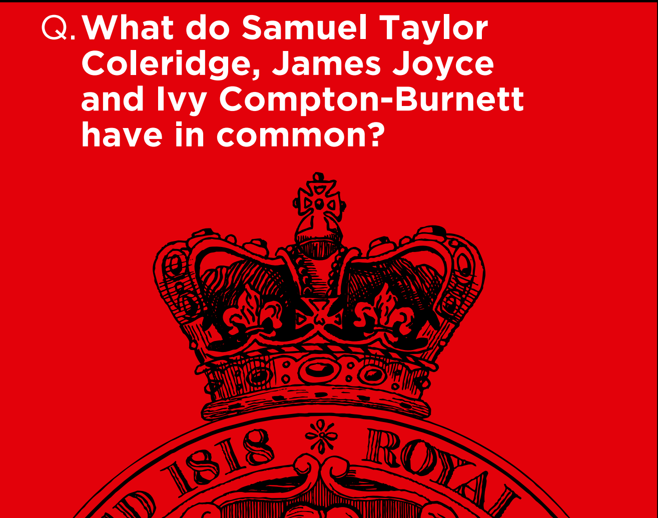
For more information and to book tickets for any of the above *Prospect* events please visit: **prospectmagazine.co.uk/events**
Editor's Club members go FREE to all *Prospect* events

Has education lost its way?

Today education is supposed to be about 'empowering' the student, but little empowerment stems from memorizing facts or mugging up process skills. Genuine empowerment comes from understanding others and articulating common goals. This is supposed to be covered by teaching the humanities, but high-pressure testing tends to turn the humanities into yet another memorization chore.

The PER Group websites:
www.philosophyforeducation.co.uk
www.perprospero.co.uk

Q. **What do Samuel Taylor Coleridge, James Joyce and Ivy Compton-Burnett have in common?**



A. **They all received grants from the Royal Literary Fund.**

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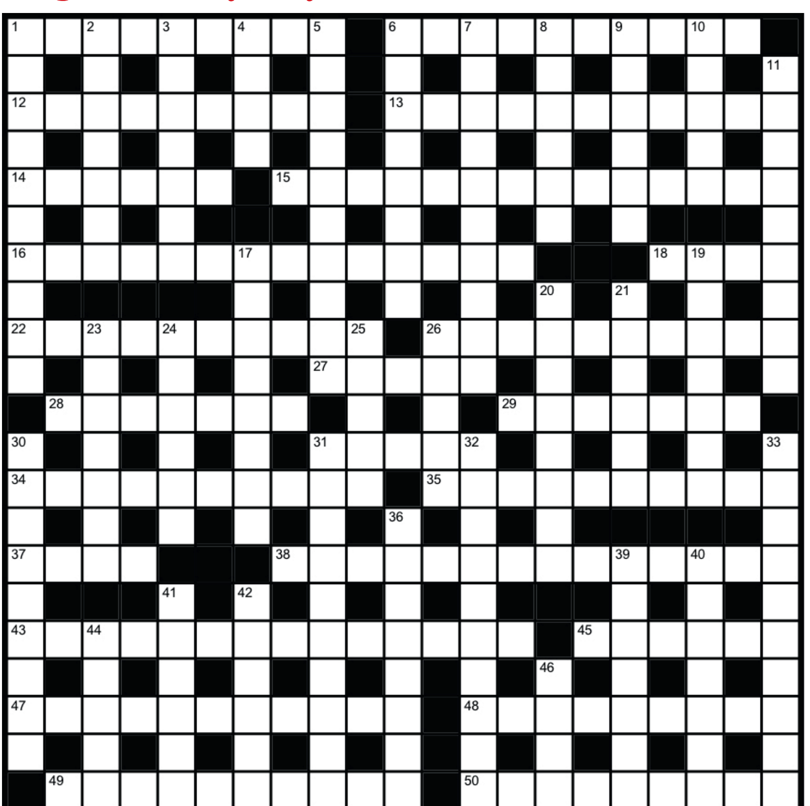
Last month's generalist solutions

Across: 1 Battle of Naseby, 8 Sheikh, 13 Derated, 14 Great Commoner, 15 Non placet, 16 Exstipulate, 17 Groo-groos, 19 Mycologists, 21 Mandelbrot set, 22 Of late, 26 Ukrainians, 27 Badezimmer, 30 Effigy, 32 Pierian spring, 35 Mrs Malaprop, 37 Subaltern, 38 *Il Penseroso*, 40 Ortanique, 41 Contrabassoon, 42 Emeriti, 43 Sussex, 44 Lleyn Peninsula

Down: 1 Badinage, 2 Tyrannosaur, 3 *Little Gidding*, 4 Old school tie, 5 Night, 6 Steve Smith, 7 Bates, 9 Homburg, 10 Ionian Sea, 11 Harpers Ferry, 12 Rouille, 18 Stringier, 20 Chenapans, 23 Friar's lantern, 24 Museum pieces, 25 Least bittern, 28 Montesquieu, 29 Cryptology, 31 Fishponds, 33 Lazenby, 34 Angelina, 36 Aintree, 39 Ousel, 40 Own up

The generalist by Didymus



ACROSS

1 Denmark's national opera of 1906 with libretto by Vilhelm Andersen and which is based on a comedy by Ludvig Holberg (9)
6 "The gorila of 3b" and "curse of st custards" who recorded his "grate thorts" about school life (10)
12 Suffolk site where the contents of a buried Anglo-Saxon ship were discovered in 1939 (6,3)
13 Wimbledon Women's Singles champion nine times between 1978 and 1990 (11)
14 Fleshy appendages hanging from palates in the back of throats (6)
15 Musical film starring Rex Harrison who "talked to the animals" (6,8)
16 Composition for piano and jazz band first performed in the Aeolian Hall in New York in February 1924 (8,2,4)
18 Wenlock or Alderley, eg (4)
22 Films reproducing real events and characters (10)
26 Batsman such as Cook, Stoneman or Malan (4-6)
27 A rocking stone (5)
28 Samuel Butler's satirical novel published anonymously in 1872 (7)
29 The Mozambique Liberation Front whose president is Filipe Nyusi (7)
31 Large drinking bowl (5)
34 US minimalist composer of *The Four Note Opera* of 1972, who now lives in Paris: anagram of 31 Down (3,7)
35 Polish pianist who was appointed Prime Minister at the end of the First World War (10)
37 Dogs, Grain, Sheppey or Walney? (4)
38 La Manche (7,7)
43 Not much change from your day job! (7,7)
45 Reddish-brown, but derived from the Latin for "white" (6)
47 Composer of 1 Across (4,7)
48 Bird, similar to the ibis, of the genus *Platalea* (9)
49 Television episode in which Tony Hancock declared "... but a pint! That's very nearly an armful!" (5,5)
50 Short silent Charlie Chaplin film of 1918 in which Scraps is the canine hero (1,4,4)

DOWN

1 Kit Williams' picture book that sparked a treasure hunt for a golden hare which was secretly buried in Ampthill Park (10)
2 Yellowish Japanese pottery with gilding and enamel (7)
3 Greenlanders' fur coats (7)
4 Wimbledon Men's Singles champion in 1975 (4)
5 Sir Robert Armstrong's statement in the *Spycatcher* trial; "____ with the truth" (10)
6 Flin Flon's province (8)
7 Industrial city in North Rhine-Westphalia, the location of Schloss Morsbroich, a museum of contemporary art (10)
8 ... fruit, the persimmon (6)
9 Inflammation of the ear (6)
10 Nickname of Schubert's *Piano Quintet in A major*, D667 (5)
11 The sapodilla plum (9)
17 Heavy cavalrymen or old fire-spitting muskets (8)
19 "Twin" in Greek, often applied to St Thomas (7)
20 Coastal resort and capital of the Côtes d'Armor département (2,6)
21 New Zealand all-rounder who was the first bowler to take 400 Test wickets, Sir Richard ... (6)
23 Village southwest of Kendal with a Gothic priory and where horse racing was introduced by the monks in the C12th (7)
24 Matt ..., England's most capped scrum-half until passed by Danny Care (6)
25 Athenian statesman and sage: one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece (5)
26 Scoop with the tongue (3,2)
30 US novelist who wrote *East of Eden* (9)
31 Recently retired BBC football commentator (4,6)
32 Notorious prison in Southwark from 1373 to 1842 (10)
33 A poem with two rhymes in five tercets followed by a quatrain (10)
36 Odin's eight-legged grey horse which could traverse land, sea and air (8)
39 Italian Dominican friar, the greatest of the medieval Scholastic theologians (7)
40 Chambered or pearly cephalopod molluscs (7)
41 Oriental prison or an Italian bathing house (6)
42 Belgian port where the barquentine Mercator is now a museum (6)
44 Surname of the hero of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et Le Noir* (5)
46 Ghawdex, the 37 Across location of the Ggantija temples (4)

Last month's generalist solutions can be found on the opposing page

Enigmas & puzzles

Socks and shares

Barry R Clarke

On Planet Pogo, the Unipeds manage to attend social events by hopping around on their only leg. At one of their sock parties, five boxes are produced each containing the same number of socks. Father Hop takes 3 boxes and his wife Mother Hop takes the remaining 2 so that they each have less than 100 socks each.

"That's not fair," says Mother. "You have more socks than me."

"Darn it!" says Father, and with that he gives 1 sock to his wife.

"But we don't have any!" exclaims Skip, their eldest child.

So in a fit of benevolence, Mother now shares her socks equally between herself, Father Hop and their 3 children. At this point, 3 of their neighbours call in, so Father distributes his socks equally between himself, the rest of his family, and their 3 visitors.

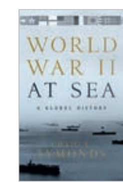
How many socks are in each box?

Last month's solution

	first name	*surname*	*town*	*character*
1	Gordon	Mop	Fondle	hen
2	Andrea	Bottle	Mudwich	witch
3	Edith	Haggis	Cheeseham	penguin
4	Cuthbert	Whinge	Ballyhoo	carrot

How to enter

The generalist prize



The winner receives a copy of *World War II at Sea: A Global History* by Craig L Symonds, one of the finest naval historians at work today. A complete narrative of the naval war and all of its belligerents, on all of the world's oceans and seas, it details how and why naval operations dominated the conflict.

Enigmas & puzzles prize

The winner receives a copy of *Phantom Architecture* by Philip Wilkinson. Here, he examines unbuilt buildings include the grand projects that acted as architectural calling cards, experimental designs that stretch technology and visions for the future of the city.

Rules

Send your solution to answer@prospect-magazine.co.uk or Crossword/Enigmas, *Prospect*, 2 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1H 9AA. Include your email and postal address. Entries must be received by 6th July. Winners announced in our August issue.

Last month's winners

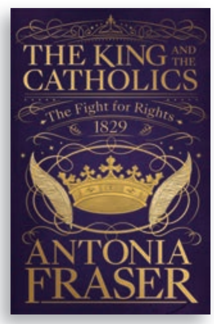
The generalist: Charlotte Priestman, Reigate
Enigmas & puzzles: Darryl Oscroft, Nottingham

Download a PDF of this page at www.prospectmagazine.co.uk

Brief encounter

Antonia Fraser

Historian



The King and the Catholics: The Fight for Rights, 1829
by Antonia Fraser is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson

First news event you can recall?
I remember my mother in floods of angry tears over what is now known as Munich, in 1938. My parents had just been on holiday in Czechoslovakia and I somehow associated the two events—I thought the Czechs had done something naughty whereas she was actually crying in sympathy with them.

The book you are most embarrassed you have never yet read?
Crime and Punishment. People never believe me but I'm saving it up like the rest of Dostoyevsky. Good title, by the way.

One bit of advice you'd give to your younger self?
Stop trying to look like Liz Taylor. It's never going to happen.

Which historical figure would you most like to have dinner with?
King Charles II: an amusing, cynical, tall, dark and handsome man. In spite of his reputation as the Merry Monarch where ladies were concerned, he had great respect for them, and liked them for their actual company as well as their physical enchantments (an attitude thought rather odd at the time). There would be no legal problems lurking for him today.

If you were given £1m to spend on other people, what would you spend it on and why?
I would spend it on introducing deprived young people to a pleasure they might not otherwise encounter. Cricket, in memory of Harold [Pinter]'s passion, is a good example. As a Hackney boy who had never seen a match, Harold had the good luck to be introduced to cricket when he was evacuated to Yorkshire in wartime; there he fell in love with Len Hutton and never looked back. Evacuation presupposes war; I would like to achieve it by peaceful means.

The talent you wish you had?
I wish I could sing. I have found visits to the opera to be magic since I was introduced to it by my first boyfriend when I was 18. Going to the Wigmore Hall to hear *Winterreise* is sheer pleasure. Yet my own voice is best summed up by what happened when I was in the annual Gilbert & Sullivan at the Dragon School (because I had to have a part). Bruno, the producer, put his ear to my mouth as I trilled, and said one word: "Don't."

The best and worst presents you've ever received
The ring Harold gave me when he won the Nobel Prize in 2005: it's a so-called Marquise ring, almond-shaped with tiny diamonds, very pretty, and whenever anyone admires it, I have an opportunity to boast…

What is the biggest problem of all?
Patience is the biggest problem. My Nannie was fond of quoting to me: Patience is a virtue
Possess it if you can
It's seldom had by woman
And never by a man
I'm still working on it.

What do you most regret?
Not working harder at Oxford. Having worked very hard during my schooldays, I somehow thought I should now aim at getting a degree in Pleasure. As I only got a modest Third in Pleasure at best, I should have stuck to my plan to get a First in History. P

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