

"BOLLOCKS TO BREXIT"

A SPECIAL
SUPPLEMENT OF
ESSAYS

INTERVIEW WITH
OLGA DZIEWULSKA

by_GUILIA HILMOINE

"THIS IRISH STUFF"

by_MÉABH MAGEE

THE AGE OF
DE-ENLIGHTENMENT

by_JOSEPH JONES

FUKUYAMA; OR THE
RETURN OF HISTORY

by_VICTOR CHAIX

THE CULTURAL LOSS
OF BREXIT

by_SUKIRTI LOHANI

photography+editing_VICTOR CHAIX



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A D I S C U S S I O N

W I T H O L G A

D Z I E W U L S K A

interview+edited_GIULIA HILMOINE

Olga Dziewulska is the Press Attachée of The European Parliament Liaison Office in the UK since 2015. She has a keen interest in the EU's relations with mainstream media, Euroscepticism and the role of social media in public services. She accepted to meet Strand Magazine to give us her point of view on Brexit, "Europeanness" and the next European elections.

Can you describe the role of the European Parliament Liaison Office in the UK? How has this role evolved after Brexit?

It is a double-sided role. The primary purpose of the European Parliament Liaison Office is to provide European citizens with information about what their Members at the European Parliament (MEPs) are doing and this Parliament's role. We are, of course, most prominent at the time of European Elections. We are also a platform for all of MEPs in the UK: they mainly work in Brussels and act as facilitators, as well as a point of contact. We assist them in organising events and meetings.

We hear very often that Brexit is the result of the population's ignorance about the European Union, a common view in which the EU would be too bureaucratic and opaque. According to you, is there also an issue regarding the sense of belonging? How is it related to the idea of the "European culture"?

The opinion polls the EU commissions regularly show that contrary to some popular opinion, people do identify themselves with a sense of a common European identity. The EU and the European Parliament are increasingly

important in the view of citizens and I frequently feel that the "European identity crisis" might be more of a ghost than real data.

The debate is too often vulgarised: a sense of belonging to the European Union versus the sense of belonging to a given member-state nationality. These are not opposing senses of identity – in fact, they are complimentary. European citizenship is a right that you have in addition to your national citizenship. They cannot exist without one another. Europe believes in being "united in diversity", in embracing national differences. Culture is of course a big part of identity. In Europe, we all share classical and Christian roots – all European cultures stem from similar origins. The concept of European cinema is the best example that people come across, I think: as Europeans, we feel that our cinema is different from Bollywood or Hollywood.

The European Parliament believes culture is an important part of its work. There is the LUX Prize, an award given by the European Parliament cultural committee to the best European cinema. LUX Prize winners have been awarded all the well-known awards in the film industry in Europe and beyond from the Palme d'Or to the Venice Biennale or to the Foreign Language Oscar. Here, in our London office, we have an art space where we host fortnightly exhibitions. An example is our 12 stars Gallery, which gathers the best of European culture in visual arts.

Also, anyone who works in diplomacy will tell you that cultural diplomacy is crucial in fostering an understanding between people. We focus on this too – rather than taking a

homogenised view of European culture, we would exhibit the best German artist, we would invite a Portuguese opera singer to Europe Day celebrations. It is about sharing other cultures within than our own. It shows people that, culturally speaking, Europe is incredibly rich and interesting precisely because it is so varied.

Can you tell us more about the period of the Brexit referendum campaign? What role did you play during the campaign? How do you analyse it now?

My role was a very limited one. A referendum in a Member State is always a national matter. Being a member of the EU does not limit your sovereignty and, therefore, the EU played no part in the referendum. Of course, we continued to do our job, which is to provide citizens information about it. We also provided information to campaigns and politicians from both sides, whenever they requested it. As the press officer, I was responding to queries on factual matters involving the European Parliament. The European Union did not stop because there was going to be a referendum in the UK, we all carried on. This has been true

since – legislation keeps on being made, work continues on a myriad of topics. Today, for instance, the Parliament has voted on a major clean energy package, and Angela Merkel is speaking to MEPs in Strasbourg about her vision of the future of the EU.

How do you analyse reasons for Brexit?

It is not for me to analyse reasons for Brexit. The Parliament's role is to ensure that cooperation between the EU and the UK continues. For us, citizens are first and their rights must be protected. The European project continues.

So... Did you consider the "defence of the EU" in the Brexit campaign not one of your prerogatives?

As I said, during the campaign our hands were tied for all the right reasons, though not all would agree. In more general terms, I think we can all agree that the EU can do better when it comes to communicating its own work. I know there is room for improvement in my work, in the Parliament's work and in the whole

VOTING ELIGIBILITY FOR EU CITIZENS IN THE UK THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2019

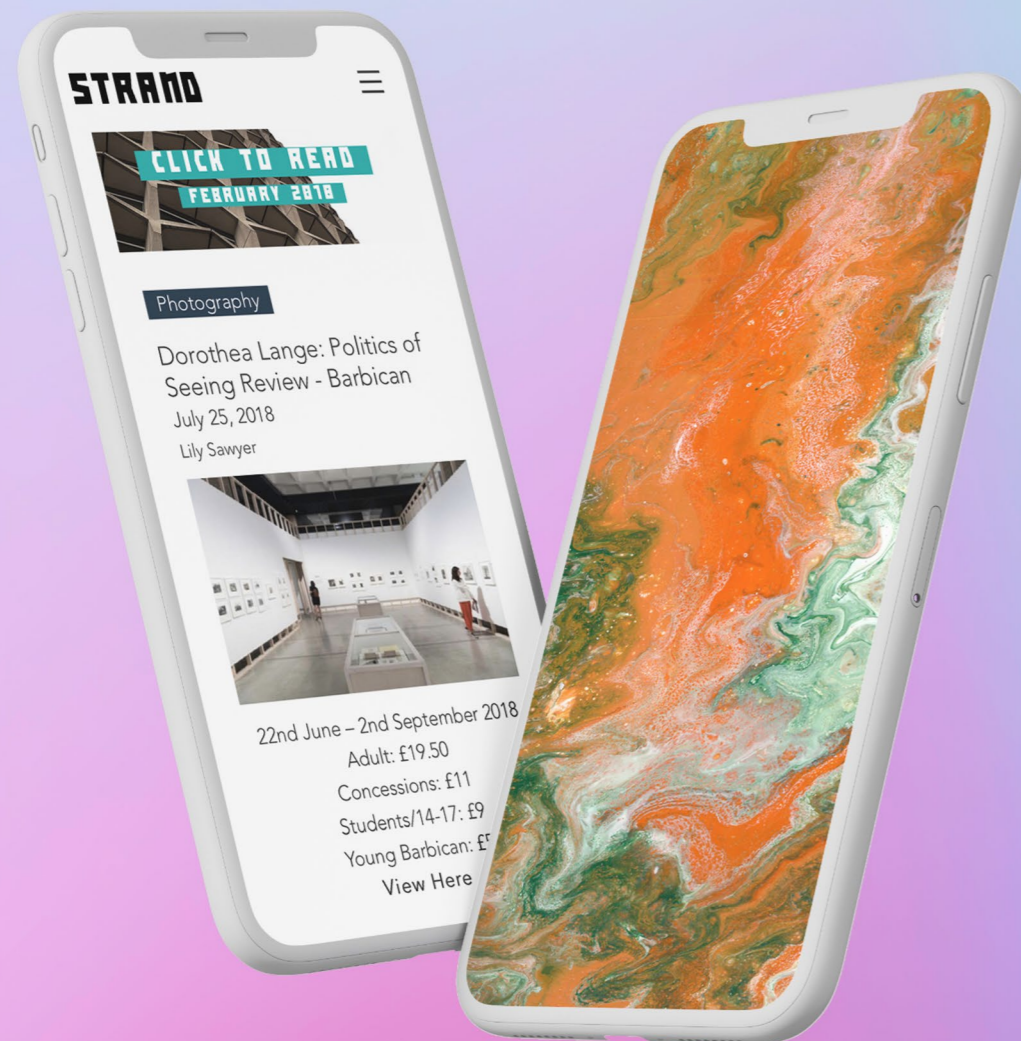
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Croatia	Luxembourg
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of the EU's work but I think there has already been great progress, even in the last few years. I also think social media has helped us greatly. The European Parliament's Facebook page is one of the most followed government page and it receives a very high engagement. That is a clear sign of recovery!

What about your future in London? Will the office close?

If only Brexit was this clear! Nothing is certain here, but for now our work continues. I hope that for the sake of EU citizens living in the UK, when the agreement is reached, there will be some presence of the European Parliament here. Everything else depends on the withdrawal agreement, which is still undecided.

Thank you very much. On a last note, can you tell us more about your current campaign, "thistimeimvoting.eu"?

The campaign, which is our Election campaign, is now our main focus. Of course, we follow news on Brexit but the European

Parliament elections, which are taking place on the 23 to the 26 of May 2019, are the name of the game. We need to tell everyone living in the UK with a EU passport that they still have the right to vote in the European elections, even if there is not going to be an election here, in the UK. There are 3.5 million European citizens in the UK and most of the EU Member States give you the right to vote when you live outside the European Union. If your readers would like to find out more, we would encourage them to go to the thistimeimvoting.eu website to sign up. If you think your democratic right to vote is an important one, please help us spread the word. We are the best source of information about how to vote and where to do it, so if you sign up we will make sure you know what to do to make your voice matter in next year's European Elections.



“ T H I S

I R I S H

S T U F F ”

With less than five months remaining before the UK is due to leave the EU, the Democratic Unionist Party has announced that it will not support the Prime Minister's latest proposal of a backstop (keeping open borders on the Irish Island), to avoid a custom border between Northern-Ireland and the UK. If things continue as they are, May's already shaky government could well fall apart and we will still be no closer to a solution on the border dispute. Being Northern Irish myself, it is hard for me to respond to the disaster unfolding in Westminster with anything other than frustration. From my perspective, Brexit and the resulting border issues are the latest in a long line of problems in the North, dilemmas that have been allowed to fester through British negligence.

That may sound harsh, but the situation we have been left with is the result of Westminster dodging its responsibilities in Northern Ireland for years. It has been nearly two years since we have not had a functioning devolved government. Since the assembly collapsed in January 2017, the British government has made almost no effort to mediate between the DUP and the left-wing Sinn Féin party. If anything, the Tory-DUP confidence and supply deal has only increased tensions at home, echoing the kind of pro-unionist bias that was supposed to end in Westminster with the Good Friday Agreement. It would be ludicrous to accuse May's government of itching a return of violence. However, by the same token, I would argue that any government truly concerned with protecting the peace process would not have shown so little regard for the Good Friday Agreement (GFA, the cornerstone of the Irish peace process) or waited this long to meaningfully address the issue of the border.

This is why it is so difficult not to get frustrated: the current government behaves as though NI was an afterthought. Karen Bradley (The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland), with astonishing candor, admits that before taking her post she was unaware of the

written_MÉABH MAGEE

sectarian tensions that remain a basic fact of Northern Irish politics. All the while, Jacob Rees-Mogg, almost a parody of himself at this point, suggests a return of inspections at the border, "as we had during the Troubles." It is easy to mock this kind of ignorance, but these incidents typify the tone with which the government discusses Northern Ireland. Apathetic at best, outright colonial at worst.

Public opinion on the mainland can be just as callous. Lord Ashcroft's poll in June found that two thirds of Conservative and Leave voters would rather leave the customs union than avoid a hard border in Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the same fraction agreed in the poll that a hard border "would be likely to create division and provoke paramilitary activity, threatening peace and security". This may seem hyperbolic to an English reader, but from an Irish perspective, to reintroduce a hard border would be inextricably associated with the Troubles.

For all my complaining, I struggle to explain the gravity of what is happening in my wee country. This isn't because the problems we are facing in the light of Brexit are very hard to understand, it is just that the majority of people in England knows very little about our history and politics, and it is hard to explain one without the other. Most people will have heard of the Troubles or know what the DUP is, but usually not much beyond that. This isn't an offence; we all pay more attention to the news that affects us directly. It is only when I'm asked to provide cheap and cheerful explanations of Northern Ireland for strangers' benefit that my patience runs thin. It's hard (if not awkward) to try to condense almost 40 years' worth of violence into a conversation at the Pret.

I will try to give useful context here. When the Troubles ended at last in 1998, it was the end of an absolutely grueling conflict in which over 3,500 people died, more than half of

whom were civilians. The conflict saw not only paramilitary terrorism from both republican and loyalist forces, but also a considerable amount of state violence from the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary police force. When this nightmare finally ended, it left Northern Ireland a strongly tight and guarded society. Communities were largely segregated into Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists and it took eight years after the GFA in 1998 to have a power-sharing executive formed.

This coalition between the DUP and Sinn Féin in 2007 was far from perfect, but it was certainly preferable to the horror that preceded it. It was not a government that was ever going to run smoothly. Sinn Féin was considered by many to be synonymous with the Provisional IRA and the DUP had for decades been vehemently opposed to any kind of political compromise (or even basic civil rights) for Catholics in the North. Despite all that, this unlikely little government rumbled along for ten years and I am very fortunate to have grown up in a Northern Ireland far more stable than that of my parents. In my lifetime our conflicts have been political and conceptual rather than physically violent, and while we can still observe a Protestant/Catholic division, the lines have blurred more than would have been considered possible only twenty years ago.

It is this progress that makes our current problems all the more worrying. In the past two years we have seen far too much backsliding for comfort, both in our institutions and in public debate. The more time passes without a functioning Assembly, the more resentment between the parties grow and the more I worry that the Stormont parliament buildings won't be restored.

I am not trying to be hysterical here. When I say that I am genuinely afraid of a return of paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland, I am not claiming that the Troubles 2.0 will erupt tomorrow. My concern is that the situation at home is already quite tense. We have no devolved government and rather than attempting to fix the problems, which essentially amount to petty disagreements over

(right)
'When we have no government'

by_MÉABH MAGEE

an Irish Language Act and legacy enquires, the Tories have ignored their obligation to mediate NI political parties in favor of using the DUP to prop up May's ailing government. With the share of power and the GFA already undermined, as well as no plans to restore Stormont in sight, the last thing we need is uncertainty over our historically fraught border.

The British government has, for the past few years, allowed a dangerous situation in Northern Ireland to get worse and worse. It continually behaves as though Northern Irish interests are somehow fundamentally separate to the rest of Britain, as though we are not their citizens too. My fear is that if this government does not realise soon how reductive and harmful an attitude that is, if something is not done to address the current constitutional problems in the North, then the likelihood that Brexit and a hard border will lead to civil unrest is significantly greater.





T H E A G E

O F

D E - E N L I G H T E N M E N T

written_JOSEPH JONES

Is it just me or is western civilization gravely ill? Most would agree with Graeme Garrard's assertion that 'the West today is a legacy of... the Enlightenment'. Yet, Enlightenment values - rationalism, tolerance, liberty, universality and science - have seemingly fallen into disregard in recent years. Could we be experiencing the twilight of the West, the age of de-enlightenment? Civilizations ebb and flow, grow and decay. The stories of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, the Caliphate, the Mayas, and China tell us that the West will one day join them in the graveyard of Civilizations. One need only browse the news to see that the day may have already knocked on our door.

We now live in the era of 'fake news' and 'alternatives facts', an era where, as Rudy Giuliani crudely puts it, 'truth isn't truth'. It's a far cry indeed from the 'age of reason'. The internet has largely made information abundant, which is beneficial, but it has also been used by countries like Russia to undermine the faith that western populaces have in their institutions. Cyber warfare has been raging for years: armies internet trolls spread 'alternative facts' all over the web. Many believe that this delivered Trump and Brexit. But we needn't look abroad for people keen to break down

our trust in our institutions. Britain's media barons are doing a good job of it themselves. The Daily Mail, who's attitude to truth is somewhat flimsy, responded to a court ruling in 2016 (that restricted Theresa May's ability to trigger Article 50 without parliamentary consent) by publishing the faces of the judges who made the ruling on their front page, under the headline of 'Enemies of the People'. In a similar line of attack, 'The Judges Versus the People', was found on the front page of the Daily Telegraph. An attack on the judiciary power by a corrupt press? How very Orwellian.

This exemplifies a return of superstitious religion into the public domain that was typical of pre-enlightenment Europe. But the religion I refer to is not Christianity, nor Islam, but Nationalism: because, as Frank Wright puts it, 'nationalisms are not merely "like" religions - they are religions'. Nationalism has always been a useful tool for the elite to garner obedience from the working classes, as Benjamin Disraeli understood well. But in recent years, due to the combination of economic discontentment and a poisonous

media, nationalism has become so enthralling as to no longer require factual evidence. Brexit is the obvious example. As an older lady once said to me regarding her decision to support Brexit, 'we remember when Britain was great!'. This nonsense is endorsed and perpetuated by the elites. Jacob Rees-Mogg and Boris Johnson, the products of Britain's twisted public school system, have become standard-bearers for irrationalism in public discourse. Let's focus on the Commonwealth rather than Europe, they argue, completely disregarding the fact that Britain lacks any commodity, service or even a consumer market that the Commonwealth would be more interested in than, for instance, those offered by China or the United States.

The same irrationalism is rampant across the Atlantic Ocean. In 2016, a prankster read out Trump quotes to Trump supporters and asked whether they supported them or not. When it is revealed that the statement was in fact made by Hitler, one reply was that 'if Trump (had) said em' I'd support em!'. Nationalism aside, traditional expressions of

irrational religion are alive and well among evangelists. According to some reports, 40% of U.S Citizens believe that the second coming of Christ will happen by 2050. Is it any surprise that they vote for a climate change denier when they believe the end of the world is near anyway?

Climate change denialism is not the only expression of a rejection of science in the west. Vaccine denialism is also largely subscribed to by the educated middle-classes. It is extraordinarily sentimental that some parents have more faith in a disgraced former Doctor than they do in the scientific community. Reports show that the proportion of children in England getting the MMR jab has fallen for the fourth year in a row: in 2017-18, only 91.2% of children received it. The parents of the remaining 8.8% are not just endangering the lives of their children; but of all other children too. The OEDC warns that antibiotic-resistant superbug infections will kill 90,000 people in Britain over the next thirty years. If humanity survives the threats of nuclear war and climate change, we may very well still

be wiped out by treatment-resistant viruses, aided and abetted by a curious loss of faith in rational science among the western populace. Aren't we slipping, in some way, into a new era of superstition?

Another aspect of the de-Enlightenment has been the decline of the Public Sphere. Some may say that the public sphere has never been more robust or alive, thanks to the internet. I disagree: I believe that smartphones and Wi-Fi have done more in the atomization of society than in bringing it together. Political engagement, for most people, has been reduced to sharing memes rather than going out and demonstrating. History tells us that only mass movements in the physical space can enact real change. I think there was a sinister motive behind the coalition government's introduction of online petition debates: one of its purpose was also to convince people that they are being politically active by staying indoors rather than protesting outside, in force. Moreover, the public sphere today is increasingly dominated by the elite. Fewer and fewer working class' voices are heard. The education reforms of the coalition government, particularly with regards to funding in higher education, have erected considerable barriers for the non-privileged to pursue further education. The public sphere will unequivocally suffer from it. Our journalists and politicians already exist in an echo chamber. With less and less engagement from ordinary people in the public sphere, can't we say that western civic society is in terminal decline?

Now, let's move away from pessimism and fatalism. How do we get out of this conundrum? Inequality in the west has reached levels that have historically caused social collapse and catastrophe. This is not the sign of a healthy society, and people are turning to extreme alternatives. These ones, who have been winning late elections - Trump, Bolsonaro, Orban, etc - are the wrong answers to the right questions. Perhaps this is symptomatic of a natural Western decline. Perhaps the rise of China will bring about a new Sino-centric civilization, one that draws more from the teachings of Confucius than of Locke and Voltaire, to replace what appears to be our terminally ill model. Perhaps this is for the best. China may be ruled by a ruthless, authoritarian regime, but Xi Jinping is at least taking seriously the threat of humanity's collective suicide by way of climate change. Which leads me to my last point. We must start by ditching our economic model. Because of our obsession with infinite GDP growth in a finite world, we are marching cheerfully towards extinction. Perhaps our woeful response to climate change is the ultimate expression of de-enlightenment; the west having collectively concluded, as Socrates spins in his grave, that it is better to be 'ignorantly happy' than to be 'unhappily enlightened'.

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F U K U Y A M A ; O R , T H E R E T U R N O F H I S T O R Y

written_VICTOR CHAIX

'I was wrong about the unidirectionality of history': Francis Fukuyama responds to a question raised by the public during a conference in London, in mid-October. How this is interesting, that the same man that once declared man's ideological evolution to be over, now turns his vests and calls for urgent historical change. Because of rising nationalism, populism and identity politics at the global scale, with Trump's election and the Brexit referendum as especially revealing, the famous author of *The end of History* and the *Last Man* has had no choice but to backtrack on his 1989 position, to admit the resurgence of major historical turmoil. As he observed in his new book, *Identity*, liberal democracy does not suffice to citizens which also crave a sense of community and an institutional recognition of their identity. Yet, this latter desire could be said to represent a mere antithesis to the former imperfection, bringing in its baggage if not more limits and divisiveness. It may be time, I believe, to think about a third alternative, or synthesis: the sovereignty of particulars inscribed in a universal framework of individual freedom, an equilibrium which most of today's political issues calls for in a time of systemic malaise and paralysis. Beyond Fukuyama's grand narratives, we need to re-invent a political model that will do without the inconveniences of both full liberalism and isolationist nationalism.

In his 1989 essay, not long before Berliners would destroy and cross a wall that separated the world in two, Francis Fukuyama thought he observed the 'unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism'. From a Hegelian historicist framework, which believes in the progress of history as taking place predominantly and antecedently in the realm of ideas, he contended the 'triumph of the West, of the Western idea', or democratic and liberal capitalism. His narrative charmed many intellectuals at the time, with the idea that, in a way, history has reached an end: 'what we may be witnessing – he argued – is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a

particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government'. What an embarrassing situation is he in now. The world has quite changed since 1989.

In a *New Statesman* interview, a journalist observes that 'History is having its revenge on Francis Fukuyama'. This one is indeed compelled to admit that 'this extended period, which started with Reagan and Thatcher, in which a certain set of ideas about the benefits of unregulated markets took hold, in many ways it's had a disastrous effect'. Once the messiah of neo-liberals, Fukuyama appears more like a revolutionary dissident of the capitalist status quo nowadays: in this interesting interview, he not only argues that socialism or at least redistributive programs 'ought to come back', but also that 'certain things Karl Marx said are turning out to be true', such as the crisis of overproduction and the lack of demand to support it. People change, as we say. Nevertheless, his ideological backflip comes with an interesting diagnosis of contemporary issues: The main challenge in today's politics, he argues, is identity politics; a phenomenon in which he visibly has a point.

Liberal democracy and the unequal global order it has created has left a lot of losers. Instead of providing abundance and contentment, the once very confident system of globalized, free-marketed society has significantly wounded the social-cohesion and cultural-identity of nations, a gap that populist politicians were but happy to fill. With their 'politics of authenticity', populists took hold of the crisis as an opportunity to offer a supposed existential remedy to confused and angry citizens: nationalism and isolationism. In the view King's College professor John Bew, contemporary identity politics is but a result

of our previous unrestrained globalism: 'As the cracks have appeared in the edifice of internationalism, so more atavistic forms of identity have bubbled up to the surface and seeped through the cracks'. His opinion piece in the *New Statesman*, 'Revenge of the Nation State', argues current political nationalism to be a reaction to the population's loss of landmarks.

The coming Brexit, hence, is but a symptom of this historical trend, in this perspective.

Beyond an economic argument, the issue at hand was one of culture, of how was the British population to keep its identity in face of an aggressive globalization. It is in that that Remainers misunderstood issues at stake, according to Fukuyama, by fixating most of their campaign on economic questions. But even for those latter, Brexiteers had reason to protest: financial de-regulation operated by institutions like the EU were, in his words, 'elite-driven policies that turned out to be pretty disastrous'. As observed by the *New Statesman*, 'For many of those who backed Brexit, including a significant number of Labor voters, the referendum was a chance to reject both a discredited British political

establishment, a failing economic model and a profoundly flawed EU'. Rather than an ignorant vote, Brexit was thus a lucid protest against a pretentious but failing world order, it was 'a reflection of profound economic and social discontent'. Brexiteers were the avant-gardist revolutionaries of today's geopolitics: in John Bew's words, 'they have inspired a revolution for which no one was prepared'.

Undeniably, then, we are in the midst of a new historical dynamic, an inevitable step of history's sociopolitical progress. Liberal democracy could not stand as the end point of History, if ever there is one, but rather is an imperfect historical artefact of our heritage. The backlash we now face is, admittedly, quite violent: a repressed facet of our nature and political organization that came back in full force as the elite did all it could to keep it deep underground. As John Bew points out, 'future historians are likely to place great emphasis on the 2007-2008 financial crisis as the moment at which the clouds began to form', a turning point in which started a truthful systemic questioning of the political status quo. This questioning, in turn, had for effect



of bringing to the rise the very antinomic force of democratic liberalism: nationalistic and isolationist authoritarianism. For a big part of the intelligentsia, this came as a major hangover: as John Bew observes, 'To those who saw the future in terms of increasing integration and supranational governance, the events of the last few years have been hard to accept'.

In this way, the entity that came back from the depth, affirming itself as the sole source of political sovereignty and control, is the good old nation-state. Very resistant, this modern-born institution survived when a common-view not so long ago was to see it progressively fade in profit of the rule of markets. The reason, for Bew, is the intricate link the nation-state has with modern democracy: it is a 'relatively recent creation, bound up with modernity, democracy and self-determination'. This inevitable comeback nevertheless affirms itself in its harshest Machiavellianism, bringing us to 'a new era of realpolitik' in which reigns a strong 'disregard for the rules-based international order as human rights are eroded, sovereignty flouted and red lines traversed on a whim'. This surprise resurgence also brings back to life the shadow of war, a worry suggested by the same pattern of escalating tensions between Nations that European ones faced prior to World War One. The eventual Thucydides trap raised by tensions between China and the United States, for instance.

(right)
'Liberty Leading the People' _1830
 by_EUGÈNE DELACROIX

It seems, for the moment, that a new model struggles to make its way through beyond the classic opposition between nationalism and internationalism. Between human rights and realpolitik. Between unilateralism and multilateralism. Between Democracy and authoritarianism. Recent political strife, in my view, is but a step in History's natural course. And, instead of remaining trapped in its violence, we could indeed start to re-envision our desired system. One based on equilibrium and sanity. There is no need for a grand master narrative as Fukuyama's, but solely a refreshed political basis from which we would not stand powerless. We are, as John Bew sees it, in 'the midst of a historical cycle': the original Hegelian historical dialectic of thesis (liberal democracy), antithesis (nationalist authoritarianism); now, with some will force, we could reach its synthesis, which myself alone cannot predict but in which we will all have to participate. In his new book *Identity*, Fukuyama gives a hint of solutions at hand: 'there is a larger agenda of integrating smaller groups into larger wholes on which trust and citizenship can be based'; resolving the conflict between the particulars and the general. In his words: 'identity can be used to divide, but it can also be used to integrate. That in the end will be the remedy for the populist politics of the present'. Integrating national sovereignty inside a larger frame of international solidarity also belongs, in my view, to today's list of necessities.

With chance, I manage to get a few words from Fukuyama at the end of his conference. His talk raised a lot of concerns for British identity after Brexit, so I ask him to develop on this. His response is confident: the multiculturalist, tolerant and open identity that Britain has held as a tradition, 'so ingrained in the population's national myth', will endure, well after Brexit. Could the United Kingdom hold to Fukuyama's optimism? This, in turn, is our responsibility, as students of King's College London, Europe.





THE CULTURAL

LOSS

OF

BREXIT

“Art, Freedom and Creativity will change society faster than politics” – Victor Pinchuk

Art’s power, in a large part, derives from its ability to transcend linguistic and cultural frontiers. To admire Picasso’s work, for example, one does not require a knowledge of the Spanish language. Likewise, bands like Pink Floyd have attained fame worldwide, despite 80% of the world’s population having limited or no knowledge of the world’s lingua franca. Naturally, one may consider literature and films as art forms falling victim to language barriers, however this may also be overcome through the use of translators and subtitles.

In recent history, there are numerable examples whereby artists have explored foreign countries, engaging with unfamiliar cultures in order to develop their art. Ravi Shankar, an Indian classical musician, introduced George Harrison to the sitar, a plucked string instrument originating from South Asia, resulting in *Collaborations*, an eclectic fusion of Jazz and classical Indian music. Likewise, George Orwell, in his quest to understand destitution and the lives of those living on the fringes of society, spent nearly two years in Paris, creating content for *Down and Out in Paris and London*. For centuries, it is known, artists have escaped the constraints of their borders, seeking inspiration from the exotic and the unknown.

Britain itself has a thriving creative industry, which as of 2017, was worth over £92 billion to the country’s GDP: significantly larger than its contributions to the scientific industry.

Home to the world’s finest art schools, including Central Saint Martins and London College of Fashion, it is evident that Britain is a leading provider of creative arts education. Coupled with its literary heritage, thriving music scene and a world-famous fashion week, the arts are intrinsic to British culture.

Unfortunately, the coming of Brexit, coupled with an increasing anti-immigrant rhetoric, threatens the world artists’ right to cultural freedom and exposure to a diverse range of art forms, otherwise unavailable in one’s native country. A poll conducted by the Creative Industries Federation (CIF) revealed that 96% of its members voted for remain, a significantly higher number than the rest of the country, and they have good reasons for doing so, given the positive impact of the EU on arts funding and on the free movement of creatives.

Artists, particularly musicians and theatre performers, may face difficulties touring across Europe. The majority of British bands tour Europe regularly, holding concerts and performing in festivals such as FIB and Sziget. However, the implications of a hard Brexit would be that artists and their crew require visas and carnets for their equipment. Brexit would have a profound impact on up-and-coming artists, as it is likely that touring Europe would no longer be financially viable: extending their fame would be more challenging.

The British Film and Television industry is blossoming. British TV is increasing in popularity, due to the likes of Doctor Who and

Downton Abbey. Hollywood itself has chosen to film blockbusters here, such as *Jurassic World: A Fallen Kingdom* in the UK. With Brexit looming, however, film-producers are concerned about their ability to recruit European actors and film-makers, as well as about their access to grants from Creative Europe. With a lack of funding, production companies may find filming in Britain arduous, and shift their locations elsewhere.

It is estimated that there are currently over 130,000 EU nationals that are employed within the creative industries, with architecture and visual arts particularly reliant on EU talent. Creative industries are concerned that they will struggle to this latter due to anti-EU xenophobia, as well as potential difficulties in obtaining work permits and visas. Martin Roth, the German-born former director of the V&A, claimed that his job would have been less attractive in a post-Brexit era, and that it was unlikely that he would have taken up the role. Increasing uncertainty regarding Britain’s future adversely impacts our creative industries, as talented individuals may have second thoughts about studying and working in the UK.

Over £345 million has been received by British arts organisations between 2007 and 2016. This money has helped revive galleries, allowed indie filmmakers to practise their art and encouraged the British public to have a greater appreciation of literature and poetry. Already, funding for arts has been cut in schools, many of them offering limited access to creative and performing arts. A lack of funding would moreover have a detrimental impact upon Britain’s thriving arts scene, with, potentially, fewer British students starting their careers in creative arts. Coupled with the uncertainty regarding EU nationals and their ability to work in the UK, the arts industry could potentially miss out on hundreds of talented individuals and their contributions to the country’s creative industry.

Unfortunately, a Brexit deal is yet to be confirmed, and it is unlikely to be completed anytime soon. Creative industries can only hope that the UK will do its best not to prevent EU-based artists to work in the UK, keeping as much as it can the, very precious, free movement of talent. Currently, only Britain’s spot in Eurovision remains safe in a post-Brexit era.

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