CAMDEN

TAMZIN LENT interviews Frank Auerbach

SAM WHITE argues for Good Design in London

SAM RUBENSTEIN sees Anti-semitism on the Left

Take back control

At a recent meeting to discuss higher education, one anxious parent asked, 'Which university course will be most useful for the job market?' University, once accepted as an opportunity to train the mind, is now viewed as a vocational entrée to the world of work. The problem confronting the current generation of school pupils is that technology, AI and currents of globalisation will continue to move the goalposts for future employment. The probability of spending one's working life in a single organisation, or even in the same area of expertise, has diminished markedly. All the more reason, therefore, not to focus on a unitary subject, but rather to cultivate a genuinely rounded education to prepare best for adaptability and resilience.

Education privileges the personal, not the impersonal. Unless the aim is to replicate the robotic in humans, schools should strive to enhance pupils' three-dimensional profiles. After all, they exist to support social development and prepare pupils for citizenship, not just to focus on management data. It behoves schools to promote cognitive flexibility, critical thinking and emotional intelligence, which already figure amongst the most desired qualities of potential employers. It is not just the application of knowledge to the real world which is important, it is the ability to work with others, to demonstrate analytical skills and have facility with language. Appreciating voice and tone in English, studying the irrational in myths or politics, showing team spirit and creativity in the public arena, all these form as essential a training for future life as do a knowledge of Maths or Science.

Developing the ability to think is a much vaunted goal, but few schools acknowledge how difficult it has become to foster a degree of critical autonomy in the adolescent mind. The modern world conspires to anaesthetise teenagers: social media companies deceive their users by manipulating their attention and deliberately engineering addiction to the services they provide; they induce people to surrender their autonomy, as Mr Soros has pointed out. Such power distorts attention. As one former Facebook executive remarked, 'you can use money to amplify whatever you believe and get people to believe what is popular is now truthful. And what is not popular may not be truthful.' From here to believing propaganda or fake news is but a small step. Hence the primacy of promoting critical thinking.

If the most effective way to ensure independence of mind would be to restore schools to their previous status as sanctuaries of learning, to staunch the invasion of the outer world, what better remedy than to ration or ban that most pernicious of influences, the mobile telephone? For it is the drug of social media which reduces the attention span, disfigures the use of English and, ironically, can lead to isolation, social anxiety and thereby undermine mental health.

The psychological pressures of external chatrooms should be replaced by the inner and authentic experience of developing mind and exploring identity through reading. 'There is strong evidence that reading for pleasure can increase empathy, improve relationships with others, reduce the symptoms of depression and improve wellbeing throughout life', concludes research carried out for the Reading Agency. It is imperative that schools create time and an environment for reading: not only does it improve social capital, but clear benefits also include improved critical thinking, greater creativity, an extended vocabulary and enhanced writing skills, all advantageous in future life.

Reading responds to man's basic need for narrative; people are engineered to look for patterns and meaning. If Beckett saw the task of the artist as 'to find a form that accommodates the mess', the urge for the reader is no less insistent. We seek to make sense of the world, to find validation, catharsis and a sense of reserving something private for ourselves in our conspiratorial identification with the characters on the page. The poetry of language is the very essence of our culture. Where Seamus Heaney explained, 'I rhyme to see myself, to set the darkness echoing', the reader seeks the enabling metaphor, the resonance of the writer's language, through which to develop a personal and shared experience and refine a perception of the world.

For some time now, Britain has questioned the validity of the idea of a literary canon or the need to study 'classic' authors. Other nations, by contrast, take pride in their literary heritage: France and Italy study milestones in their literary history, from Rabelais to Camus, from Dante to Levi. The Chinese government expects all pupils by age 15 to learn and recite 80 poems from classical works onwards. This serves not only to anchor a sense of cultural identity, it acknowledges, too, lasting value in the development of memorisation capacity. Why outsource memory to Google when you can delight in making connections between words and experiences, often subconsciously?

Britain's 15 year olds are among the most compulsive internet users in the world, noted the Education Policy Institute last year. The foremost challenge facing educators is to enable tomorrow's adults to look beyond self-obsession, beyond the populism amplified by twittersphere with its banks of rage and political correctness, to engage with the real world, not the myopic, virtual construct. The need for schools to prepare teenagers adequately for independence, society and the world of work has never been more critical.

Westminster Abbey was one of the main attractions of the Lumiere London light festival, January 2018 (Photo: Dr G. Ward-Smith)

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Front Cover: Vasari, *Ritratto di sei poeti toscani* (*Portrait of six Tuscan poets*) (1544)

The seated figure is Dante Alighieri; the others are Francesco Petrarcha, Guido Cavalcanti, Giovanni Boccaccio; on the left stand Cino di Pistoia and Guittone d'Arezzo, poets of the dolce stil novo, the new vernacular poetry.

Frank Auerbach: an Interview

Tamzin Lent interviews the remaining living 'modern master', the artist Frank Auerbach

Frank Auerbach, Mornington Crescent - Summer Morning
Photo Credit: ©Tate, London 2018
© Frank Auerbach, courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

'Artist's words are temporary, their work, for better or worse, permanent ……'

Frank Auerbach has been described as England's 'only living Modern Master'. He has given to the world a legacy of over seventy years of art so vibrant and viscerally dynamic that each work truly feels alive. Whether it be the abstracted urban micro-landscapes dedicated to the few streets and vistas around his North London studio – Camden Town, Mornington Crescent, Primrose Hill – or the mesmeric portraits of his handful of weekly, regular sitters (such as his wife Julia, David Landau, Catherine Lampert the art critic, writer and curator of his recent retrospective at the Tate, his son Jake all of whom he has painted and repainted for decades), his works are so infused with dynamism as to question our perspectives, creating a potent sense that the past, present and the future seem fluid and multi-faceted.

Born in Berlin in 1931 to Jewish parents, Auerbach was sent to England on the Kindertransport, fleeing Nazi persecution. Arriving in London, his passion for art burgeoned and grew, and he studied at St Martins from 1948-1952 before attending the Royal College of Art from 1952-1955. However, the largest influence on his art training arguably came from a series of additional art classes he took at Borough Polytechnic, now London South Bank University where he and fellow St Martin's student and friend Leon Kossoff were taught by David Bomberg. He became friends with a coterie of fellow artists he met through the burgeoning art world of London, artists such as Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud, Jacob Epstein, and Michael Andrews Auerbach subsequently taught at a number of secondary schools and art schools such as the Slade and Camberwell School of Art. Through it all, he painted 364 days a year, giving himself only one day off per year for a holiday.

Auerbach's first major show was at Beaux-Arts Gallery London in 1956 when he was 25 with an eminent critic calling it 'the most exciting and impressive first one-man show since Francis Bacon in 1949'. Freud commented in later years that he remembered the young artist in these terms "I remember thinking, 'what a lot of paint! When you're an artist yourself, you are always very aware of the technicalities. They were all heaped with paint'. In 1986 he represented Britain in the Venice Biennale sharing the Golden Lion with Sigmar Polke. His work has escalated dramatically in price ever since and is hugely sought after. David Bowie owned Auerbach's Head of Berda Boehm and after his death it was put up for auction in November 2016 where it was sold for £3.8million. According to the editor of Bonham's magazine, Lucinda Bredin, Bonhams will be selling a major work of his in their contemporary sale later this year!

> The man himself, with his sensitivity, determination and relentless dedication is just as captivating as his artworks

However, despite his increased fame, Auerbach is somewhat of a social recluse, barely leaving his Mornington Crescent studio other than to wander occasionally around Camden town. I was fortunate that the opportunity for an interview arose through a felicitous meeting with one of his long-term sitters, David Landau, a businessman and collector, and I was able to ask Auerbach the questions that have particularly fascinated me about his life and work. The man himself, with his sensitivity, determination and relentless dedication, is just as captivating as his artworks. He comes across as very modest and humble – quietly charming. I have on many occasions walked the quiet backwater streets around his studio and attempted to consider particular viewpoints from where he must have stopped to sketch, before returning to the studio to capture the moment in paint.

"I prefer chaos to order, and relish the messy development of London"

Frank Auerbach: I will answer you spontaneously – off the top of my head – and of course you realise that painters change their approach all the time – their words are temporary, their work, for better or worse, permanent.

Tamzin Lent: What do you think influences your work the most – artists from the Past, Modern or Contemporary? I asked Catherine Lampert (the art curator of the recent Tate Exhibition, and long-time Auerbach sitter that question at her evening lecture and talk at the Tate and she said that , I quote: 'knowing you for so long I am quite certain that you are influenced in each work by present events and artists'. Yet you have said that 'my main influence is great art such as Vuillard … also Aztec and Egyptian Art …. And the Old Masters ….. Constable …. And Turner. What is your view?

FA: I have been most stimulated, at least when younger, by the work of my own time, and by the standards – of novelty, of excitement. But I was always fascinated by the museums, not least because the roots of novelty and excitement are buried in something that has become superficially familiar. I can't give you a list, it would include all the world's great art, but as an example I was very stirred by the Veronese's and Rembrandt exhibitions, and by Delacroix, recently, even before the Exhibition. Like all painters of my generation I have been aware of Picasso and Matisse all my life.

TL: I really think that everything I do, in life and in art is influenced by things I have seen in my everyday life – as I go to school see friends, travel around London, England and abroad, conversations I have overheard, literature, music, poetry and art. What would you say inspires you the most and why?

FA: I agree with you. As to Art I reiterate the above. But sometimes literature reminds one what intensity is, sometimes events in one's life remind one of intensity (and, perhaps, eternity).

TL: Camden Town and art is in many ways the essence of my schooling first at North London Collegiate with its origins in The Camden Town of 1850 and the first headmistresses' fascination with art through her artist husband, her friendship with Millais and the many well-known artists that were pupils or teachers such as Peggy Angus. With my current school Westminster there is a long tradition of arts scholarship and in fact Westminster School of Art which was located at 18 Tufton Street, Deans Yard had David Bomberg as an alumni. Why has specifically Camden been such an essential part of your subject matter? What is it that captivates you about the area and constantly inspires you?

FA: The reason I paint Camden is because I have spent most of my time here since 1954; I feel that I have more to say about a subject that I know well. But, I have to admit, that Camden seems one of the liveliest, most varied (even in architecture), most exciting parts of London.

TL: Would you give yourself a label? To me your art is everything – abstract, portrait, landscape, expressionist, impressionist, realist ….

FA: That is a funny question. Painters don't like to be labelled. I feel myself to be a sort of realist, but I like my pictures to be new and strange, and have a strange interest in the Surrealist ethos.

TL: The readers of our magazine will I know be interested in your childhood experiences of arriving in the UK as a refugee from Berlin sent by your parents in 1939 on the Kindertransport to attend school in the countryside set up by refugees themselves, Bunce Court which sounds in some ways tranquil and idyllic against the backdrop of immense sadness – a life without your family. What are your first memories of drawing and painting? What did you most enjoy about your school years? When did you first realise you wanted to be an artist or was it a gradual process?

FA: I remember having a colouring book, and colouring a picture of two children on a seesaw – I must have been about three or four years old. Bunce Court was an isolated community and most of my friends wrote, acted and painted – the days were long and many of us were there during the holidays. When I left I continued with all these activities, but soon realised that painting required the focus of a lifetime. Soon I was doing nothing much else.

TL: What advice would you give to our readers wanting to follow art as a career? What makes you keep painting?

FA: As to readers and an art career. I don't think the word 'career' is appropriate. There is only one standard, the vast majority of us fail to reach the standard of great art totally, all fail to some extent. Don't start on art without a strong compulsion.

TL: I met someone recently who was taught by you at the Slade, which to her was a hugely significant part of her artistic journey and experience. Were there any particular students of yours that have gone on to become well known artists? Did any of your students, or the teaching process, inspire you?

FA: I taught, part-time at seven different art schools and quite a few students became artists, too many to list. But I am rather touched that some, for instance John Wonnacott, Tom Phillips, John Virtue * (an artist who recently gave a talk at our school), have gone in different directions far beyond what I could have taught them.

TL: We are now in a new phase of the London sky line with myriad high rise gleaming megaliths, the Shard, the dazzling new views over the Thames… You have said that the aim of painting is 'to capture a raw experience for art'. What is it that you find in the contemporary London urban landscape to ensure you keep capturing 'a raw experience'? Do you have any views on the changes to the London skyline that you have witnessed?

FA: I prefer chaos to order, and relish the messy development of London. We make a sense of order out of a sort of chaos, so we need chaos and the unpredictable.

TL: Are there any particular characteristics of a person that make you decide to select him/her as a model and to know that they will sit for you for so long? What do you think makes an inspiring sitter?

FA: The first quality that a sitter must have is fortitude, reliability and a certain stoicism. But (or, and) I find that very busy and active people are the most reliable. I like them all and because I take so long over each work, they change and age with each 'portrait'. Also, a slight change of pose, or of canvas shape, suggests a wholly new, and mysterious formal entity to me.

TL: Finally, do other people's emotions such as the sitter's feelings and projections of their own inner psychology somehow influence your art or is it purely your own emotions, or a mix of both?

FA: Definitely a mix of both – you have got it in one!
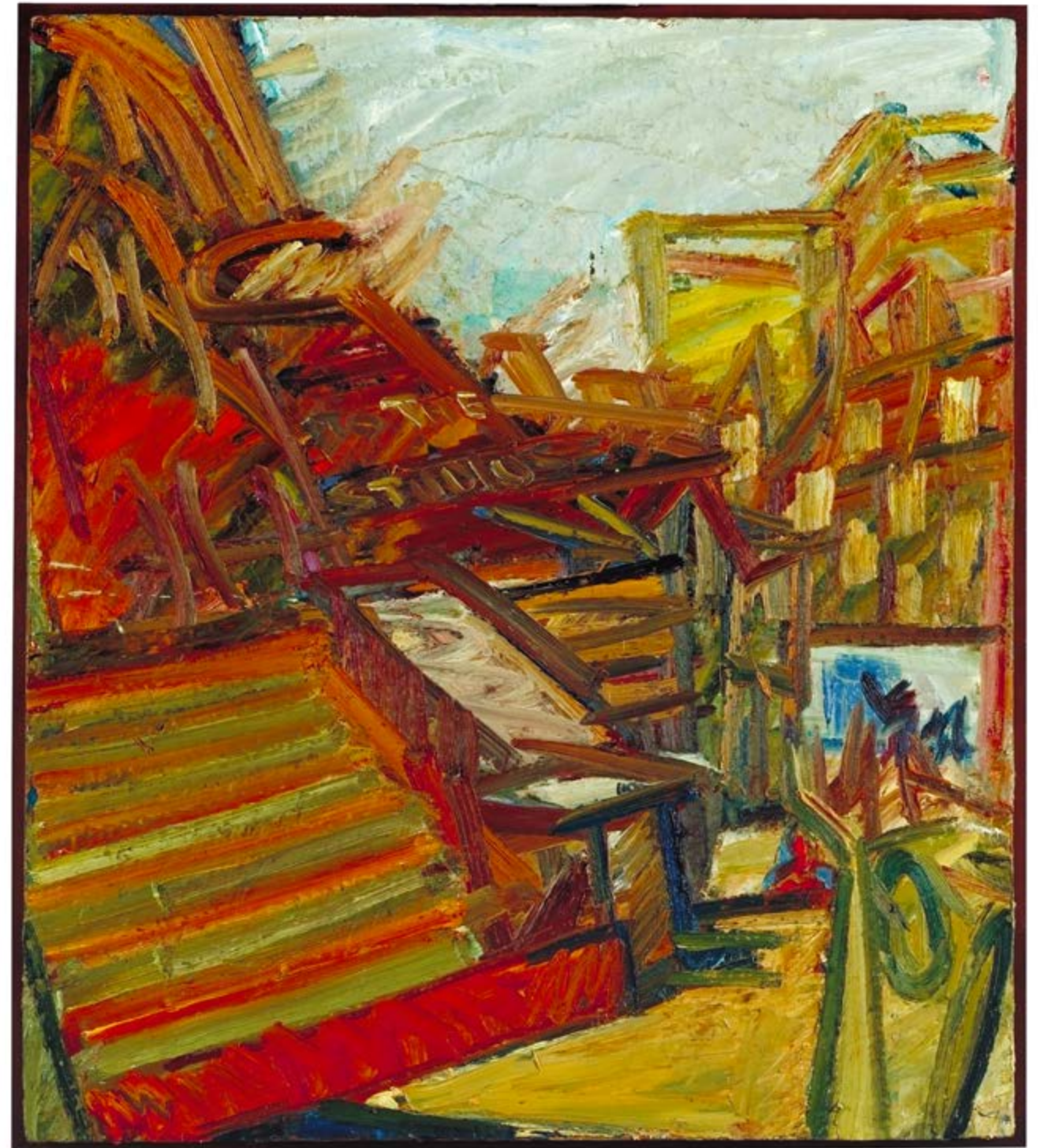
Frank Auerbach, To the Studios
Photo Credit: ©Tate, London 2018
© Frank Auerbach, courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

Truth Decay

Lucas Haarmann examines how truth and objective reporting have been eroded by fake news and explores how communication has become weaponised
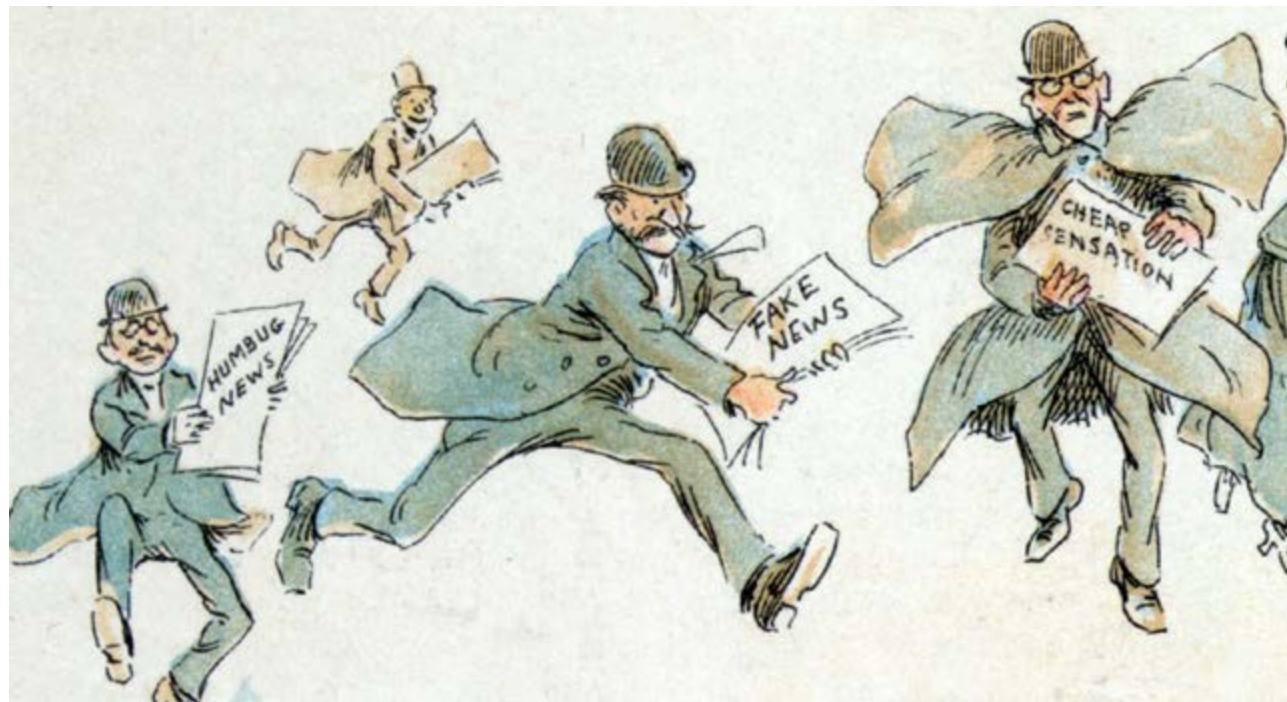
The late Amos Tversky, a psychologist and pioneer of behavioural economics, summarised his work as follows: "No one has ever made a decision because of a number. They needed a story". Together with his colleague and close friend Daniel Kahneman, Tversky sought to explain how people make decisions. In his book The Undoing Project, Michael Lewis describes how both Kahneman and Tversky came to terms with the life-or-death consequences of human psychology. As a seven-year-old Jewish boy living in German-occupied Paris, Kahneman was caught beyond curfew by a black-uniformed SS soldier. The soldier, reminded of his own son, hugged him and gave him money. The younger Tversky received Israel's highest military decoration in 1956 when he pulled a panic-stricken soldier away from a lit explosive charge, wounding himself in the process. Perhaps driven by these experiences, both men dedicated their work to challenging what they saw as a misconceived faith in the rationality of the human mind. Kahneman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2002 for work on risk aversion, an award he might have shared with his partner had Tversky not died six years earlier. Tversky left behind the following thoughts, which he kept pinned above his desk:

- People predict by making up stories.
- People live under uncertainty whether they like it or not.
- People believe they can tell the future if they work hard enough.
- People accept any explanation as long as it fits the facts.
- People often work hard to obtain information they already have and avoid new knowledge.
- Man is a deterministic device thrown into a probabilistic Universe. In this match, surprises are expected.
- Everything that has already happened must have been inevitable.

It is well known that our cognitive biases lead us to favour information that confirms our beliefs. To Tversky, however, these cognitive biases were more than just simple binary preferences. As 'deterministic devices in a probabilistic Universe', we are obsessed with certainty, as elusive as that may be. We therefore create certainty through the medium of stories. This is what Tversky means by the past being 'inevitable': we tend to string random events from the past into a narrative. Our ability to formulate stories has arguably been invaluable, allowing for the development of religion and culture, the cohesive forces that bind societies together. However, our penchant for narratives over numbers also leaves us vulnerable to manipulation.

As we enter what Michael Rich of RAND calls 'Truth Decay', a period in which the border between fact and fiction is eroding, Tversky's thoughts could not be more relevant. While traditional journalism has never been immune to misleading or biased reporting, even the most egregious tabloid paper could never match the fake news generating potential of social media. The result is intense disagreement on issues where there used to be consensus, sometimes with absurd consequences: in 2014, measles made an unprecedented return to the United States thanks to the spread of the anti-vaccine movement. Persuaded by a thoroughly discredited theory linking measles vaccinations and autism, thousands of paranoid American parents exposed their children to a disease that had supposedly been eliminated over a decade earlier. Tversky suggested that 'people accept any explanation as long as it fits the facts'. But, in a world where the truth depends on the Facebook pages you follow, the facts have become subjective. Provided that the story they tell is sufficiently compelling, fringe groups like the anti-vaccination movement can thus enter the mainstream.

Fearing that fake news will be the downfall of his utopian vision, Mark Zuckerberg is responding by suppressing all news on Facebook. In January 2018, Facebook revealed it will push public content to the bottom of the news feed, favouring content from friends and family instead. In the words of Zuckerberg, the intention is to encourage 'meaningful interactions' rather than the 'sensationalism, misinformation and polarisation' Facebook has been blamed for.[1] Facebook will also prioritise news that is 'relevant to people's local community'. It remains to be seen, however, how a blanket suppression of news outlets will solve Truth Decay. Critics argue that the changes will push users off Facebook and that they represent little more than a desperate attempt at deflecting negative publicity away from the social network.

Just one year earlier, in December 2016, Facebook's fake news strategy was far more optimistic. In the wake of the Pizzagate conspiracy theory, Facebook began allowing American users to report 'false news stories'. These stories are then checked by third-party fact-checking organisations like PolitiFact, who can attach a warning label to the original post. However, it has been impossible for the fact-checkers to keep up. As of December 2017, PolitiFact had marked 1,722 fake news URLs.[2] By their own estimation, this only accounted for 3% of the fake news stories generated in America over that period of time. This is not the only issue. Facebook's system also relies on its users trusting the impartiality of its fact-checkers, whose political views will inevitably colour their judgements. Although PolitiFact has highlighted inaccurate statements made by those on the left, particularly numerous false claims made by Barack Obama about the Affordable Care Act, the project is easily perceived as an anti-Republican smear campaign. A 2013 study by George Mason University's Centre for Media and Public Affairs found 52% of Republican statements reviewed by PolitiFact were deemed false, versus 24% for Democratic statements. Since 2013, this gulf has only widened. However just PolitiFact's verdicts may be, such an enormous inegality alienates Republican supporters. Indeed, thanks to its perceived bias, Facebook's fact-checking system has had the unintended effect of entrenching certain individuals in their fiercely anti-establishment viewpoints.

People predict by making up stories

While it has been facilitated by technology, Truth Decay has its origin in human cognitive bias. So long as the world remains unpredictable and confusing, we will try to make sense of it my making up stories. This is unavoidable. A troubling pattern, though, is the use of fiction in politics to create a false reality that serves the purposes of their creators. There may be no better example of this new form of propaganda than modern Russia and its so-called 'managed democracy'. In Russia, the use of disinformation has been traced to Vladimir Surkov, Vladimir Putin's personal adviser and a man who is often seen as the Kremlin's central ideologist. Surkov labels himself as a "political technologist", a fitting title for a man who reportedly engineers Russian politics. But whereas autocratic governments might typically rely on fear as a means of suppressing dissent, Surkov embraces and exploits chaos. As a former theatre student, Surkov "turned Russian politics into a bewildering, constantly changing piece of theatre", in the words of Adam Curtis of the BBC. The Kremlin will shift positions seemingly randomly: supporting ultra-nationalist groups one day, liberal human rights groups the next. In this way, Putin's party, United Russia, absorbs all political ideologies and leaves no space for the opposition.

By blurring the boundaries between what is real and what is fake, Surkov also fosters a feeling of confusion that draws people towards Putin, who is represented as the sure-footed, competent leader. This emphasis on stability and strength exploits memories of the mafia-controlled mayhem of the 1990s and fears that Russia has been declining, both militarily and economically, ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Narratives of renewed glory in Ukraine and Syria are used to paper over a stagnant, resource-dependent economy, which saw growth of just 1.6% in 2017.[3] Nevertheless, the Russian government's use of contradictory politics and tightly controlled state-run media has given it an extraordinarily powerful lever of political control.

The consequences of the use of fictitious narratives in politics are clear. When truth leaves the debate and emotion takes its place, citizens are all the more vulnerable to manipulation. Indeed, our politics has already been poisoned by falsehoods like the Leave campaign's infamous '£350 million a week for the NHS' claim. False information can thus be weaponised as a tool of power. At a certain point, this could create a disturbing situation where fiction is present everywhere and visible nowhere. Truth will have fully decayed.

1 newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/01/trusted-sources/
2 www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2017/dec/15/we-started-fact-checking-partnership-facebook-year/
3 www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-13/putinomics-loses-its-power-as-stagnation-starts-reign-in-russia
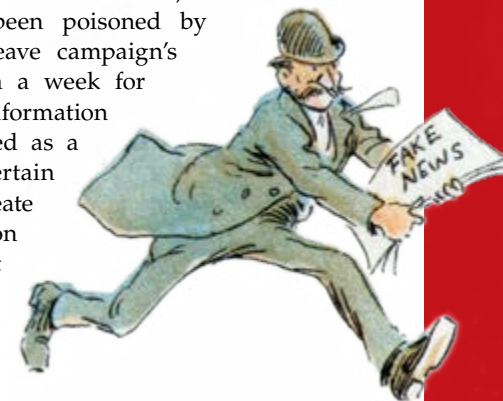
How Saturday Night Live has Changed the Political Discourse

Tilly Walters fondly remembers the time when SNL informed and developed the US view of politics and investigates why this has changed

On 16 October, 2016, @realdonaldtrump tweeted "Watched Saturday Night Live hit job on me. Time to retire the boring and unfunny show. Alec Baldwin portrayal stinks. Media rigging election!" Then again, on 4 December, "Just tried watching Saturday Night Live – unwatchable! Totally biased, not funny and the Baldwin impersonation just can't get any worse. Sad." So, not entirely out of line with what many in or out of the administration have experienced in his first year of presidency, (Clinton, May, Kim Jong-Un, to name just a few). What is most striking about these tweets is Trump's attempt to ridicule the ridiculous, and stamp down the growing influence that Saturday Night Live is having on politics, both in America and further afield. The Baldwin impersonation has become synonymous with modern political satire, sometimes perhaps too accurately: in February 2018, *El Nacional* newspaper accidentally printed a photo of Baldwin instead of Trump on their front page. SNL's lighthearted approach to politics has become all the more necessary in the current turmoil, with rumours of collusion and impeachment mentioned in articles daily, and its short skits appeal to a wider social media audience – you don't have to be an insider to get the joke.

The reason behind SNL's overwhelming, 43 year success lies behind its comedy in playing on our views of uptight and buttoned up politicians, who are so colourless and picture perfect that the tiniest slip-up (think Ed Miliband's sandwich) captures headlines for days.

So what has SNL really contributed to serious politics, with its goofy sketches, and sometimes incomprehensible long-running jokes? Its most popular ideas come from sketches that have infiltrated the political discourse, and actors that embody the role so well that they overshadow. Tina Fey's Sarah Palin is perhaps one of the best examples of this, with her line "I can see Russia from my house" now invoking a strong memory of the Alaskan Vice-Presidential candidate. Other memorable impersonations: Larry David's Bernie, Darell Hammond's Clinton, Will Ferrell's childlike George W., and most recently Kate McKinnon's gleeful, confident of success, Hillary. These actors embody the personality tics and slip-ups of these career politicians, and sometimes become a better embodiment than the politicians themselves.

Its earliest interaction with legitimate politics is widely regarded to have come with Gerald Ford's press secretary, Ron Nessen, who hosted the 17 April, 1976 episode of the show. This represented a removal of a barrier between politics and the people like nothing before – both the

show and Nessen represented possibly polar opposites in their attempts to shape the image of a not always popular President. Ford's appearance himself, saying the famous words, "Live from New York, it's Saturday night", as said before by numerous actors and comedians to some extent humanised the President, making him more relatable to the American public. Yet, like any public appearance – there is always an agenda.
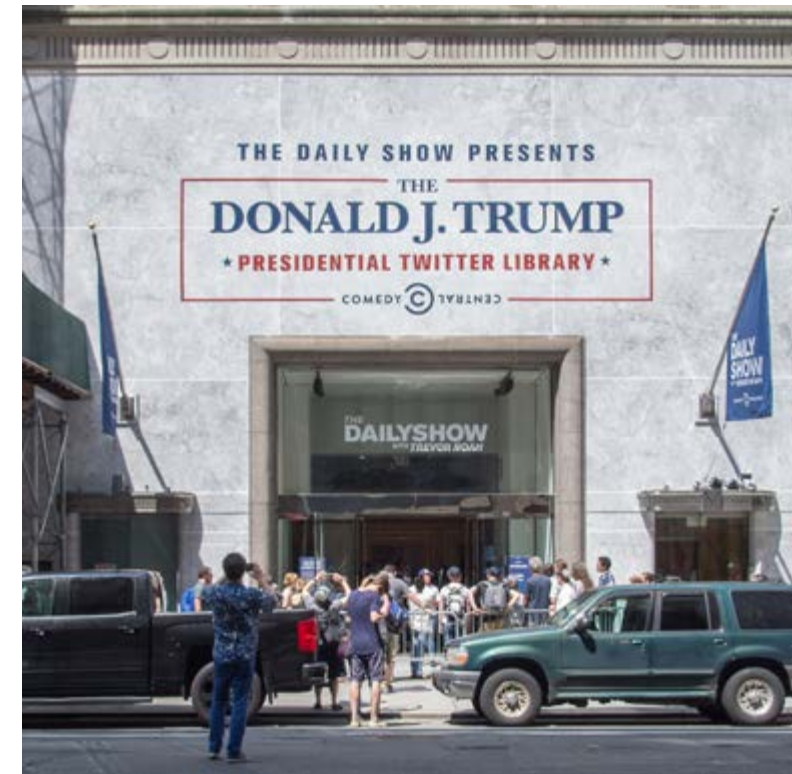
This all changed with Trump. Lyin' Ted, Low-Energy Jeb, Crooked Hillary – the 2016 race seemed like a never-ending, nightmarish skit with accusations of misbehaviour that would have sunk anyone else. Yet, the 'Fake news' and 'Liberal media' excuses are easily accepted – and it seems the media is unable to cope with such a scandal-plagued president. Take Trump's 2018 Davos speech – the headlines talked of him appearing finally 'Presidential', regardless of the allegations that had emerged just a few weeks before of an affair with a porn star, occurring mere weeks after his wife had given birth. With any other politician, this would dominate any news, regardless of how dignified they appeared – their career politician's perfect reputations would be a norm; scandal would, and could not be.

Social media has changed how the public views politicians – with soundbites and 10 second clips necessary to capture attention, and SNL seems to have been adapted perfectly for this. In its YouTube videos, uploaded a few hours after the show, and shared easily on social media, it is a type of free political advertising conveyed through comedy. It is also not just the political satire that scores comedy wins, but the sketch shows too – some of the characters have gone down in American TV history: Stefon, The Church Lady, The Californians, Jebediah Atkinson, the 1860s TV critic – to name a varied few. It is not continually trying to make a point, to hammer down a political message, and a less bi-partisan messages aside (such as the show displaying a "Vote Carter" message at the beginning of the credits), SNL has always being willing to mock, to an impressive degree, any administration in power.

Their approach to satire was forced to change, and is changing still with the election of Donald Trump. Quickly during the 2016 race, the presidential candidate seemed to produce his own comedy, and the farcical remarks made him a personality, rather than a colourless candidate. The satire therefore became more and more extreme to cope with the flood of rolling headlines concerning his sexual assault allegations, Russia corruption, racist remarks,

> *The 2016 race seemed like a never-ending, nightmarish skit*

The Daily Show's Donald J. Trump Presidential Twitter Library at 9 W 57th St. in Manhattan
Photo: Rhododendrites

sexist remarks – the list goes on. It has become supremely difficult to challenge a President, who, in most eyes is his own worst publicist, and American politics seems so dire that it is beyond mockery. Nevertheless, SNL has

persisted, and not without success. Alec Baldwin's impression has garnered huge praise – as well as attention from the man himself; it plays right to Trump's obsessive following of the media's portrayal of his presidency and approval ratings, in the most obvious way possible.

What, then, is the future for Saturday Night Live's political message? It has been able to adapt through 40 years of constant change, still remaining on air – no small feat – and is still wildly popular today. Its continuing influence can be attributed in part to the growing reliance on technology, and how SNL has adapted to fit an on-demand ideal. TV and social media have become a forum for meeting politicians, and SNL acts, and has always acted as a forum for taking these buttoned-up, picture perfect people down a peg. Technology time (such as live streams, or online Q & As) now replaces face-to-face contact, something that has become artificially less necessary, with technology acting as a forum for a type of direct contact, but without any of the human element. Ironically, it has made politics more relatable, yet less accessible. Satire can construct a more direct form of politics that is personality-based as opposed to policy based; but this comes at the risk of a caricature becoming more recognisable than the person themselves.

Alec Baldwin speaking at the 2016 San Diego Comic Con International
Photo: Gage Skidmore

Members of a Chinese military honour guard march during a welcome ceremony for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Gen. Peter Pace at the Ministry of Defense in Beijing. Photo by D. Myles Cullen.

Reporting China

Sahil Shah discusses contrasting presentations of China in the media: are we being given an oversimplified picture?

Present day reporting in the UK on China often relates to one of two topics or a combination of both: China's economic growth and its consequences or the Orwellian repression of China's Communist Party. The first topic covers anything from a slowdown in Chinese GDP growth figures to the commercial opportunities presented by the Chinese made wealthy following Deng Xiaoping's 'Reform and opening-up'. A recent column written by Financial Times (FT) columnist Gideon Rachman during the Communist Party's 19th National Congress illustrates many of the tropes which currently seem in vogue in British journalism about China.

Above all, China is viewed through the prism of the Communist Party and its actions, leading to a view of China as an indivisible monolith and – importantly – as a monolith directly opposed to the 'West'. The title of his column is 'An assertive China challenges the west'. In the article's body, he explains that 'The Chinese challenge to the west is taking place on three fronts: ideological, economic and geopolitical.' In its commentary on China's political model, the column takes up a classic refrain seen frequently in the Xi Jinping era of increasing authoritarianism: China now '[scorns]' so-called but ill defined 'western political practices' rather than desiring to import them whole-scale as it is imagined Chinese cadres once did not too long ago. However, we need not fear too much as 'Many Chinese intellectuals still look to the west as a model of political freedom.'

Rachman comes to these sorts of conclusions from focusing on the policies of the Communist Party's central leadership, such as their implementation of China's 'Great Firewall' and development of mobile payments systems faster than the 'West'. While an awareness of

the Communist Party and its policies is undoubtedly imperative to an understanding of present-day China, considering the country solely through the prism of the Communist Party constitutes an acquiescence to the narratives that they are trying to form at any one point, (i.e. 'China does not need democracy to have technology' or 'Chinese dissidents are losing motivation') and, as I will aim to set out, ignores the omnipresent historical, and social challenges to the homogenous China they are trying to create. These subtle challenges receive far less media tension in countries such as the UK because they do not always concern China 'moving towards democracy', as Rachman puts it, or are not necessarily perpetrated by self-affirmed 'dissidents'. Media organisations in European and North American nations should, however, make elucidating these challenges, which the

> ## China's entangled, heterogeneous history... elucidate[s] its current situation

Communist party is working to erase, central to their reporting rather than being beholden to the Communists' agenda and narrative. Media networks should work to add detail to our understanding of this large economic power and not promote cheap oppositions between 'China' and the 'West' – otherwise we risk making a modern return to the 'Yellow Peril' of 'Dr Fu': fears Donald Trump fed upon unashamedly on the campaign trail.

In his deeply fascinating book 'On China', which he wrote partly from his own experiences of bringing about the Nixon-era détente with Mao, Henry Kissinger expresses a different but equally in vogue perspective on China. Where Rachman focused on the perils of the Communist Party, Kissinger emphasises the greatness of 'Chinese civilisation', whatever that may mean – the product of thousands of years of unbroken and unified rule by evolving dynasties. His reverence for China is

refreshing given the disparaging view of it as a barbarian land prevalent in the 19th and early 20th centuries which continues even to the present day. Kissinger instead treats China as an equal of the 'West'. However, this does all still represent another extreme way of perceiving China. His notion of an unbroken civilisation makes him beholden to a nationalist vision of China which emerged in full force in the late 19th and 20th century and which ignores China's heterogeneity, both past and present. Nationalist narratives regarding China emerged in those periods due to anxieties over the potentially morbid decline of the Qing Empire – the final dynasty to rule most of what we now call China. Many thinkers began to compare and contrast the features of 19th century China with those of European aggressor nations such as Britain, which famously defeated China in two opium wars.

One major characteristic they noticed was the European idea of the nation state and the unity that Western European nations such as Britain and France seemed to have. And to them, a strong nation state needed a strong 'national history': intellectuals set about creating a new national narrative for 'China'. These narratives were overwhelmingly produced however, by ethnically Han Chinese and the histories they produced emphasised the importance of sinicisation to the success of all rulers of China. Sinicisation is the process by which non-Han supposedly assimilate into Han culture, and become non-barbarian in the process. Such a theory was necessary due to the uncomfortable fact for Han nationalists that non-Hans have ruled 'China' for over half its recorded history in so called 'conquest dynasties' – a famous example being the Mongol or 'Yuan' dynasty. Until very recently these Han nationalist narratives were seen, not as nationalist narratives, but as 'China's history' and this is something Kissinger seems too to pick up.

However, it is crucial that we be aware of what Han nationalism is and how it skews the past for its benefit given that many of the founders of the Communist Party itself were involved in nationalist agitations in the late Qing, and that the current Chinese state acts as a Han-centric one, drawing its legitimacy from nationalist historical narratives. In fact, understanding brought about by American academics in the 1990s of the Qing dynasty, continuing into the present day, has upended many assumptions in the academic world about what 'China' is. The Qing, China's supposed final imperial dynasty were actually, like the Mongol Yuan, a non-Han, in this case Manchu, conquest dynasty. In Han nationalist narratives, the Manchus succeeded at the beginning of their reign because they sinicised; accordingly, they argued that China was led into its deep decline only when the Manchus started to reemphasise their distinct ethnic identity and in effect 'desinicise'. However certain American academics, now known as the 'New Qing History', having taught themselves Manchu, were able to read previously inaccessible Manchu primary sources. These documents revealed the highly multi-ethnic dimension of Qing rule.

The most destabilising challenge to nationalist narratives from the New Qing History's (NQH) findings is the claim that the Manchu Qing viewed Han China

simply as one province in their 'federated' empire. In their reign, the Qing captured Tibet, Mongolia and the Western muslim provinces of what is now called Xinjiang (literally 'New Provinces'). Where before Tibet, Mongolia and Xinjiang were presumed to have been subordinate elements in the Qing's China-centred and sinicised empire, the NQH suggests they were in fact level parts of a diverse empire. This challenges historical concepts previously considered unquestionable such as whether the Qing were indeed the final 'Chinese' dynasty or just an empire which happened to rule China among other areas. Many would dismiss such ideas as facetious, arguing that even if the Qing were a multi-ethnic empire, a definite sense of a 'Chinese' culture which the nationalist movements then latched onto, continued to exist. They would point to a society built upon common Confucian values and ideas etc. However, nationalistic exigencies have shaped even these assumptions. Research into the Qing and Ming dynasties (the preceding dynasty) reveals that even within firmly Chinese 'Han territory', non-Confucian practices were being attested to right into the Qing. Court documents reveal for example a man exchanging a wife's sexual favour for male labour: a distinctly non-Confucian practice.

Undoing these two assumptions begins to undermine some key tenets of PRC rule in the present: the right of Hans to rule fully over the non-Han colonised regions of Xinjiang and Tibet, and the idea of a defined, stable Chinese culture which can be tapped into and has existed for millennia. Challenging these assumptions means challenging assertions such those Xi Jinping made recently where he claimed that 'to understand present-day China… one must … accurately appreciate the cultural soil that nourishes the Chinese people,' namely Confucianism. According to Xi, 'Confucianism,' is key to 'understanding the national characteristics of the Chinese'. If those outside the PRC's borders who want to challenge the regime focused on exposing the complexities which exist in China's history and which undermine claims like those above, rather than just on the status of democracy in China, I think that they would very potently challenge essential notions used to defend the PRC's legitimacy.

Happily, an article in this vein can also be found in the FT, written by Sophy Roberts about Harbin – the capital of China's Heilongjiang Province (i.e. present-day Manchuria) which has a very non-linear past including non-Hans, Russians and Communists. The article, entitled 'Harbin: opera and ice sculpture in China's frozen megacity', very much examines the present but faces China's entangled, heterogeneous history head-on in order to elucidate its current situation, shining a light on some complications the Communist Party would rather we forget. Indeed, despite seeming an inoffensive travel piece, the article does in fact fulfil the criteria of highlighting the omnipresent subtle challenges to the PRC's narratives I set out earlier and, for that reason, seems to me far more effective than yet another article comparing China and the 'west' or even than a history which unconsciously gives credit to Han nationalist narratives.

Seeking Common Ground

Juliet Dowley talks to a Syrian refugee and reflects on the parallel of her own family history

A man, strolling through Copenhagen, Denmark, asks a young woman for directions. She gives him the information he needs and, in thanking her, he asks her name. When she tells it to him, he recognises it as Arabic. Intrigued, he asks, "Where are you from?" She replies, "Syria." And then she adds, "But don't worry- don't be afraid of me, I'm not a Syrian refugee."

The man who told me that anecdote is Jordan Hattar, founder of the charity Help4Refugees, and to him it epitomises all that is wrong in the way we view refugees. Why would that woman assume that he would "worry" about her being Syrian? Why would a refugee make him "afraid"?

The question seems an easy one to answer. In the UK and elsewhere, "refugees" are associated with "migrants", and "migrants" with a constant onslaught of negative publicity. Cameron has called them a "swarm", *The Sun* has proclaimed "Illegals have landed", the *Daily Express* has warned of a "New asylum surge on way", even the broadsheets speak routinely of a "refugee crisis". If it was really the press that dictated attitudes, though, they would surely have changed by now. It has been over two years since Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old boy washed up, drowned, on a Turkish beach, gave the "crisis" a human face. Since then, talk of a refugee threat has increasingly turned to the threatened refugee. *The New Statesman* has praised the media for moving "from cockroaches to campaigns". But how often do we ask refugees themselves whether anything has changed?

When I asked Shaza Turkumani, an 18-year-old Syrian who fled her country for Jordan aged 14, how she thinks the term "refugee" is viewed, she told me, "It's not a good reputation."

I asked why, and she thought for a moment before replying, "People look on them as weak. They don't have a homeland. A homeland gives a person strength. He feels that he belongs somewhere. But when he's a refugee, that changes. And even if he's welcome, he feels he's not. When you're a refugee, you're forced to leave country and home. You know you're not coming back." Two things strike me about her words. First, that she sees recognising refugees' vulnerability as part of the problem, not the solution. And second, that her words could apply to refugees anywhere. In any time. In any place.

So I ask her whether she thinks that comparisons can be drawn between refugees' experiences across time periods, and across geographical distance. She seems surprised that I even need to ask the question: "Of course. I feel that we [myself and other refugees] are living the same situation, having the same problems. I feel that I understand them and they understand me."

I am, I should admit, drawing a comparison even as she speaks to me. My Grandmother, Mariette Demuth née

Bonda, was one of the millions of Jewish people who fled persecution in Nazi-occupied Europe. In January 1940, aged five, she fled with her family from occupied Prague to Genoa, Italy. From there, they travelled first to Paris, and then, after Paris too was occupied, to Saran, Correze. When her father was denounced, she and her brother were sent to a Jewish children's home in Chabanne and then to Grenoble, where a Protestant Priest helped conceal the whole family from the Nazi authorities. After the war, they uprooted again, this time to Britain, when my Grandmother was 13.

When I asked her about her experiences, she stressed the difficulties of integrating into a new country, especially at this older age: "When I came to England it was infinitely harder. I was given no help whatsoever. And I had to assimilate into the school. First it was a Welsh-speaking school and it was impossible, so I was removed after about a term. And then we went back to France where I felt very much at home, and then I came back again and was sent to boarding school, and I felt very much a foreigner…I was thrown into the deep end and I really found it very difficult… if I had been welcomed…it would have helped [me] to integrate".

> "A homeland gives a person strength"

The temptation to make comparisons with Shaza's story is overwhelming. Though, moving from one Arabic country to another, she did not face the same language barrier, she too speaks of not feeling welcome when, aged just a year older than my Grandmother was when she moved to Britain, she started school in Jordan. "The [Jordanian] citizens," she explains, "most of them didn't like for Syrians to be in Jordan. Especially my school mates…it was a very big change for everyone."

When I ask Shaza whether she still feels Syrian, her answer again reminds me of my Grandmother's story. "I still feel I'm Syrian," she replies, without hesitation. "And I'm very proud of that." For my Grandmother, it was the country she moved to aged five that felt like home, and not the one she reached aged 13: "When we got to France I very quickly felt I was French…and then when I came to England it was infinitely harder…I can't say I was settled in any way."

Noticing these similarities between her experience and Shaza's, I ask my Grandmother whether what happened to her 70 years ago influences her views of the "refugee crisis" today. Her answer surprises me. "No," she says. "We left Prague because of the Nazi persecution. Syrians, it's a different story altogether…So you can't put them into one pot. Everybody has a different story

to tell." And suddenly, I am ashamed. I fear that I have done exactly what I set out not to do: I have lumped all refugees together, viewing them as a homogenous group, assuming that there was some commonality between their experiences. What right have I, living without fear of persecution in the country I was born in, to presume to comment on or compare the experiences of people who, in time periods 70 years apart, were forced to flee from one country to another? As the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, I have been brought up to be wary of comparisons between modern-day, racist dictators and Hitler. How hypocritical, then, to compare Syrian refugees to Holocaust survivors.

Yet somehow, stubbornly, something in my mind cannot quite let go of the idea that there's a comparison to be made here. I think back to the words of Jordan Hattar, founder of Help4Refugees. "I think it's actually really helpful and important to compare what the refugees were going through [during the Second World War] with what they're going through now", he told me. "I think it's important to remember that this can happen anywhere." And, finally, I think I begin to understand.

My Grandmother, when she warned against putting people from different places "in the same pot", was talking about how dangerous it is to compare the causes of persecution, or the facts of refugees' experiences. She was warning against treating every form of persecution as though it were the same, and against comparing Assad to Hitler, or modern-day racism to 1930s anti-Semitism. Shaza and Jordan, on the other hand, were talking about recognising shared experiences, in order to recognise our shared humanity.

So perhaps comparing the experiences of refugees doesn't have to be about putting them "all in one pot". That is what, I realise now, I was doing before I spoke to Shaza, when I knew only that I would be speaking to "a refugee"-one of that nebulous, seemingly homogenous mass of pitiable people that we picture when we hear that word. After speaking to her, I saw her not as "a refugee", but as an individual: a girl, my age, hoping to study languages at university. A girl like me, only more eloquent, and with a powerful message. I wonder if this was what Jordan Hattar meant when he talked of recognising that "We could have been born in [refugees'] shoes, and they could have been born in our shoes and it's just chance really where we're born". If it is, and if drawing comparisons between the experiences of refugees at different times, and in different periods, helps us to recognise this shared humanity, then surely it can only do good?

Young Syrian refugees
Photo: Oxfam International, Winter 2013 in Zaatari refugee camp (Flickr)

Conflict in Catalonia:
What do Young People See?

Michael Seone researches student reactions in Spain to the events surrounding the Catalonian independence referendum and consequences for the province and the Spanish state

On 27 October 2017, thousands of people flooded onto the streets of Barcelona in a call for unity and the arrest of the Catalan leader, Carles Puigdemont. Within the sea of flags, Spaniards of all ages called for an end to the tensions: "Cataluña Si, España Tambien" and "Tots Som Cataluña" were just some of the hundreds of banners seen within the chanting crowd in Catalonia. If one thing holds true about events there, it is that they have polarised and radicalised citizens across Spain, and turned members of the same community against one another.

Throughout the conflict, media has focused on the politicians and crowds on the streets – little has been said so far about the opinions of the younger population, who will have to live with the repercussions of today's decisions. As evidenced by the 2016 Brexit vote, young adults may have a surprisingly different view from their seniors. This may be no different in Spain, where future generations have so much at stake, both politically and economically. How do young people view the situation in Catalonia?

Catalonia's desire to become independent has historical roots, most notably going back to the rule of General Franco in the mid-1900s. Under the fascist dictatorship, Catalonia suffered nearly 40 years of limited political freedoms and censorship, as well as the banning of autonomy and suppression of local language and traditions. Thousands of Catalonian political figures were either exiled, executed or imprisoned. In the 1970s, Spain underwent a rapid democratic transition, and Catalonia was granted increased autonomy in 1978. However, although this decision has allowed the Catalan economy, culture, and language to flourish, it has also gradually allowed support for nationalism and separatism to grow.

The most recent push for independence began in 2010, following the 2008 debt crisis in Spain, which fueled enthusiasm for Catalan autonomy from Madrid's central government. At the time, the Catalan parliament, the Generalitat, had tried to renew the Catalan statute to give the region greater autonomy from Madrid. After this move was deemed constitutionally illegal, a July 2010 demonstration was held in Barcelona, and thirst for separation has escalated ever since.

In 2015, the Generalitat decided on a legislative "disconnection from the Spanish state," which the central government again branded illegal. In January the following year, Carles Puigdemont took over as president of Catalonia, later scheduling a referendum on 1 October 2017. A month before the vote, the Spanish constitutional court suspended the referendum, seizing ballot boxes and storming the regional parliament to block the vote from taking place. Despite a police crackdown to suppress voters, the referendum yielded a 43% turnout, with nearly 90% of people backing Catalan separation from Spain. On 11 October 2017, Spanish Prime Minister Mario Rajoy made an ultimatum to the Catalan government to clarify whether they declared independence, a deadline that was later extended to 19 October. Two days later, after no official response, the central government in Madrid suspended Catalonia's autonomy, leading to the region's official declaration of independence on 27 October. This decision caused the Spanish government to dissolve the regional parliament and call fresh elections, despite Mr Puigdemont's refusal to accept removal from power. On 29 October, a large pro-unity rally was held in Barcelona, and Catalan ministers, charged with attempting to incite rebellion in the North-East, fled to Belgium to avoid domestic prosecution. At present, eight former Catalonian government members have been detained, having turned up for questioning in Madrid, and Mr Puigdemont turned himself in to the Belgian authorities on 5 November.

The battle for Catalonia has been widely perceived as an internal political issue for Spain to resolve. However, the debate has had repercussions in all sectors of Spanish society, creating divisions amongst young people too. In interviews of 16 and 17-year-olds across Spain, most young adults argued against Catalan separation, with many justifying this view in the country's constitution and laws. Others also suggested that there is a 'silent' majority that actually wants to remain within Spain. "Catalonia should not be granted independence. The country has not had a fair official vote to be able to know the people's true decision. The only votes so far have been unofficial and should not count," said one student from Barcelona. "The best thing would be to hold a legal referendum to see what Catalans truly think, and then analyse the situation from there," she added. Some young people also suggested that leaving would be worse for Catalonia than for Spain since the region would not be able to last economically on its own. "An independent Catalonia would not be able to sustain itself financially," claimed one 16-year-old from Galicia, a western area of Spain. "Currently, the region is one of the communities with the most debt. The area depends on a lot of foreign businesses for income, and leaving would cause many companies to relocate, something which would cause a lot of suffering and economic strain there," he continued.

However, there was also a significant group that argued for self-determination and felt that Catalonia should be allowed to decide the best course of action for itself. "I think the decision should be left up to the Catalan people, as long as this decision is achieved through a vote or dialogue," argued one student from North-West Spain. "Personally, I would like to see Catalonia remain a part of Spain, but Catalonia's citizens need to decide themselves. I am not Catalan, and I am not living this situation the way they are, but I know that if there are so many people that want to separate, they must have good reasons for it. They may be wrong, but it is not our place to force them to stay if they are desperate to leave," he said.

When asked to comment on the central government's actions in Catalonia and on viable solutions to end the divisions, the vast majority appealed for more dialogue and diplomacy. "I think that Spain handled the whole independence issue in the worst way they possibly could have. Especially if you look at the occurrences on 1 October after the referendum. The violence of the police force was absolutely unnecessary and the images that surfaced of the events on that day have pushed many people onto the pro-independence side. For many, it was no longer about being part

> *Young people in Spain and elsewhere could be the only vote of moderation to challenge radical ideas*

of independent Cataluña, it was more about not being part of Spain, whose government not only allowed but also called for, that kind of violence towards peaceful protesters," claimed a student from Barcelona. A 17-year-old from La Corunna also expressed similar views, suggesting that a mutually beneficial resolution to the conflict could be reached. "Ending the struggle at this point is very complicated. In general, both sides should seek a dialogue in a legal, reasonable way, trying to find a solution that would benefit everyone while still respecting the constitution. A referendum should be held to see just how many people actually want to stay. Whatever happens, we shouldn't force people to be part of something that they don't want to be," she argued.

On the other hand, many young people claimed that the Spanish government's use of force was adequate and justifiable, given the illegality of the referendum earlier in October. "The central government hasn't repressed Catalonia, it has only acted in a way to stop an act of rebellion on behalf of the Generalitat," suggested one high-school student from Madrid. "Rajoy acted according to the constitution and tried to prevent illegal elections, condemning the Catalan government for choosing an illegal path to independence. What happened in Catalonia was unconstitutional and was, therefore, a crime for which its perpetrators should be punished." Another student in Madrid also added: "The way I see it, it isn't repression when you prevent something illegal from taking place. Anyone who acts against the law should be prosecuted and suffer the consequences."

For many young people, the situation in Catalonia had some resemblance to that of the Brexit and the Scottish referendum in the UK. However, other students see the

Catalonian conflict in a different light. "I think that these three cases [Scotland, Brexit, and Catalonia] are different. In the case of Scotland and Britain, these are already independent nations and it was a matter of separating from a union. It was down to ideological differences and the economic decline of the EU respectively. In Catalonia's case, they think they are not being treated in the best way possible. There are historical reasons too: many Catalans feel they belong to a different culture and tradition to the rest of Spain – enough so that they should become a separate country," claimed one student from Northern Spain. "I think the reason why these areas want to secede is to be able to create their own separate communities, which could be comprised of their own language, culture, and laws. In Catalonia, many people want to secede to gain more political freedoms and because they feel it will be better economically and socially to split from Spain,"

she added.

Seismic events are taking place across Europe, with nationalism and separatism on the rise across the continent. Young people in Spain and elsewhere could be the only vote of moderation to challenge radical ideas. In the case of Catalonian independence, the younger demographic generally consider secession an undesirable outcome for both sides. The majority see diplomacy and dialogue, not violence, as the only solution to the current conflict. It remains to be seen whether young people's voices will be heard.

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Letter from Nepal

Inspired by Peter Dalglish's John Locke Talk on his humanitarian work in Nepal, **Amelia Stewart** and **Juliette Boury** used a school scholarship to fund their one month long volunteering project at a learning centre in the village of Bandipur

April, 2017, Kathmandu Airport, and I'm annoyed because a Buddhist monk in saffron robes has just pushed in front of me in the visa queue. I would count this as my third surreal moment in Nepal, the first being landing on one of the most dangerous runways and the second being navigating an airport often voted worst-run in the world.

We were warned about this, though. In his talk, Peter Dalglish spoke about the journey he's made countless times to Nepal: the sudden drop with mountains either side onto the runway and the passengers clapping at the relief of arriving. Even if you have flown before, every time it seems unbelievable that the pilot will find space among the Himalayas to land. Almost exactly a year after Peter's talk, Juliette and I can see the mountains through the windows, and soon we step out into the very noisy, full, polluted and (I think) beautiful Kathmandu.

We meet Bikram, the organiser we've been emailing for a year, in the carpark in the burning dust of city. He hangs white Nepalese welcome scarves over our necks. In Kathmandu – "Dustmandu" – I feel unnoticed alongside monks in every shade of orange, the constant chiming of Buddhist prayer songs, the incense, the women riding side-saddle in saris on the backs of motorbikes… Unlike

in India, we are not stared at. We slip by the monks, trekkers and sightseers from around the world flocking to the sites.

Kathmandu, everyone tells us, is a different city to how it was before the earthquake. There are plunging gaps in the rows of houses as the terraced rooftops drop to a rubble when the owners haven't the money to rebuild. Sometimes the face of a home is torn off and you see a room with half the floor left, furniture evacuated, but a picture still hanging on the wall. Many of the people we speak to about the April 2015 earthquake say that the rumble of a train still panics them.

Bikram is softly-spoken, kind, and comfortable with silence, but he seems to have thought hard about everything he says. I don't take it as an exaggeration when he describes how the poorer village kids are different to city kids: "children from the countryside are always smiling, even if they have one flipflop on their foot, they'll be smiling".

The road from Kathmandu to Bandipur is the equivalent of playing snake zenia in real life inside a car. After a couple of minutes, we give up any hope of reading in the back of the jeep and settle down into five hours of blaring Nepali music. Groggy and now seasoned to the

local pop charts, we step out into Bandipur and meet Shambu, the head of the learning centre, whose house we'll be staying in. He tells us the kids are on their school holiday and have no work yet and that the learning centre is open before and after their school day.

Thinking of what Bikram said, I am on the lookout for flipflops at 6:30am the next morning. My first sighting is of about a hundred of them in neat twos, lining the concrete steps up to the learning centre, while the kids are tucked up, barefoot and cross-legged inside. (Alongside taking off shoes before going indoors, Nepali hygiene involves buckets of water instead of toilet paper, squatting, not sitting, on the ground, and only skying from the bottle. The kids look on in horror if we drink with our lips touching our bottlenecks.) They each come up to the front to give us wild flowers and mark us with a tikka, a red paste in the centre of our foreheads, as a sign of good luck.

Later that day, in trainers, we chase after six year olds as they play tag wearing flip flops, the sixteen-year-old boys play rugby in these flipflops, the next morning, we see ten-year-olds carrying piles and piles of wood for their goats on their backs in the same flipflops at 6am before the learning centre. In fact, we only ever see them take off their shoes for the sprint races and even then, some of the kids wear their flipflops on their hands, as if they cannot part from them. Bikram's words turn out to be right: a chunk of the rubber sole is torn off, the strap on one side is popped off, their toes overstretch the shoe, yet still, the children are smiling.

In Bandipur, no one died and only a few houses were destroyed in the April 2015 earthquake. In unluckier villages, almost everyone still lives in make-shift corrugated iron and driftwood housing. When we meet Kalayani, a teacher from a nearby village, she talks about freezing in winter and suffocating in summer in her temporary housing. Her 11-year-old daughter tells us the monsoon season is the worst, as they have to run out into the storm to find their roofs which have blown away.

Kalayani is translating for Rachel, who teaches English in an international school in France. We are with Rachel on the two-year anniversary of the earthquake, a day that holds as much significance for her as it does for many of the villagers. Rachel felt the earthquake alongside twelve of her French students when she'd taken them here on a school volunteering trip. With all flights booked up and the airport on lockdown, they felt five days-worth of aftershocks too, sleeping on the beds they'd dragged out of the wreckage in a tomato field to be clear of any houses that might collapse, and eating any food the organisers could find.

Rachel is banned by her school from taking any more trips to Nepal, although some of her students have come back by themselves, and this is her third time back by herself. One of the most eye-opening moments of the whole trip is when we join her for three-day workshop on menstruation in a nearby village. Women of all ages show

> ## In the middle of all this hardship... the learning centre is a place of joy and even love

up with questions, and sometimes Rachel cannot answer ("I have relations with my husband but why am I not pregnant?"). I want know if they are angry they cannot go to the temple when they are menstruating, or sad that they are locked up for days in the dark or forced to fend for themselves in a forest when they get their first period as part of a caste ritual.

In Bandipur, Julie and I are joined elastically. Eating, sleeping, teaching, planning lessons, walking, being the only other person to talk to in English – all these are pressures and comforts. Sometimes, I half-smile thinking of an interview with Peter Andre on television I saw in London, where he said a factor in his breakup with Katie Price was them working and living together. Mainly, we have to hold back the tears of laughter in our eyes from watching them dance to Nepalese music or their drawings of yaks and ox and goats together.

One night, it storms so hard that the dirt drain running outside Shambu's home becomes a mudslide, and in running to cover from the lightening, Julie and I fall, hip-deep, in the sewage and goat poo. We spot the children's English mistakes and idiosyncrasies, like when we realise together that the "chia game!" they beg to play is not some kind of superfood cookery class but "chair game", musical chairs. Perhaps we are the only people in the village who get confused about whether the children are going to the

learning centre ("me go!") or if they need to tend to their goats ("no, me goat!").

We start to take after the Nepalese too: we barely blink when the electricity shuts down a couple of times most evenings and the light is reduced to the candles, or when the water cuts out and Shambu leaves a couple of buckets of emergency water outside our bedroom for a shower. Four gurkhas in a restaurant show us how to eat the dahl bath with our hands, with our thumb as a scoop, telling us the Western use of cutlery misses out on a key sense of food – touch. At the 2074 New Year's Eve celebrations, we join the villagers who crowd into the one street in Bandipur and crane our necks to see the traditional dancers in white and red dresses on stage.

The feeling of Bandipur is the pain of having my arms pulled out of their sockets as maybe four children fight to hold each hand. Their desire to be the centre of attention physically, vocally, comes from us being some of the few adults in their lives who have time to hold them. Shambu tells us that most of their fathers are absent, mainly because they work in the Gulf countries and are only allowed back every few years, other times because they leave the mothers for another woman. A lot of the adults

are present in the homes but also not fully there. Shambu half-jokes about the Nepalese drinking their sweet wine as tea in the morning, but the man who emerges from a house, bloodied, bandaged and staggering about in front of the children, and the old woman, lying on her back, unconscious, under the learning centre stairs one day – and the fact that the children pass around them – make me wonder how used to alcoholism the kids are. Shambu tells us that one boy is now sponsored to live in a hostel because his parents couldn't feed him and he visits them in the village on weekends.

There is an figure that we see again and again in Bandipur. Adults, lined with deep wrinkles and darkened with the sun, stooped over when they walk – and they walk slowly – heads bent down, perhaps in a permanent mark of the bricks they carry round their necks. It seems as if a chasm of age exists between the adults and the children, as if there is no transition of teenagehood and that they age forty years as soon as they start working. One moment, a child has all the fun of playing musical statues, and next, they are an exhausted mother and worker, hauling 60kg of bricks from the bazaar to the construction site and back again. It is hard imagining that these same children, who we have to hold back from running too soon in relays, would soon be the adults of Bandipur.

There are times we wince, not just from hearing their stories over dinner, but from what we see. Each child has maybe two sets of clothes, a couple are caked in dirt and smell worse than others. While the boys seem to grow more and more confident as they get older, the girls shy away, running slower in the games or forming circles to talk with each other on the grass instead of joining in. Their textbooks are astonishingly dull, and the Nepalese learning style is so rote-based that they can't help themselves from saying "My name is …" without "I attend to Notre Dame High in class …". In one religious studies subject, they must match up "God will punish" with "all those who sin", and for once, I am grateful they don't understand the English. When I ask the littlest ones to draw their families in their exercise books one day, they bring me a page with what looks like half a family, and after a while, I stop asking them to go back and finish.

In the middle of all this hardship in a tiny, remote village in Nepal, the learning centre is a place of joy and even love. Knowing it might be one of the few spaces the children have to play and learn makes it all the more significant. In the airport hotel room back in Kathmandu, my arms are light, my ears are no longer ringing and my throat isn't sore. It's more of a lack of a sense than a sense in itself, but it comes closest to the feeling of emptiness, and for a while, I feel a bit lost without them and all their fun.

Photo: Garry Knight
Stand up to Racism #March Against Racism. March 2017 (Flickr)

Anti-semitism on the Left

The Left is traditionally seen as 'Champion of the Oppressed'. So why is it that prejudice and anti-semitism have become such a problem within Labour? **Sam Rubenstein** investigates

The Israeli town of Umm al-Fahm sits just northwest of the Green Line. Its inhabitants number more than 50000, the vast majority of whom are Arab citizens of Israel. Although many undoubtedly resent that they are separated from their Arab compatriots by the nearby border wall, they are largely content with Israeli governance: 83% of them are opposed to the idea of transferring their city to Palestinian authority. In spite of this, the city is notorious in Israel as a hotbed of religious fundamentalism: indeed, the three men responsible for the shooting at Temple Mount which killed two Israeli police officers earlier this year were born and raised here. Nearby is the ancient town of Tel Megiddo, Hellenised as 'Armageddon'; as such, the inhabitants of Umm al-Fahm joke that 'doomsday is just around the corner'. As foreboding as that sounds, the city boasts four football clubs, several archaeological sites, and an art gallery which houses works by Yoko Ono. And in 2011, on 28 June, the man they thrice elected as mayor was arrested in London.

First elected in 1989, Raed Salah Abu Shakra was the mayor of the city during a 2002 suicide bombing, which took the lives of seven Israeli citizens. Just one year later, Salah was found guilty of funding Hamas and communicating with an Iranian intelligence agent: he subsequently spent two years in prison. In 2007, at a protest in East Jerusalem, he was quoted as saying that the 'blood of European children was mixed in with the dough of the Jewish holy bread', alluding to the Blood Libel, an antisemitic canard that has persisted since the Middle Ages. He returned to prison for five months in 2010, after he was convicted of assaulting a police officer

> ## A Labour Party which continues to be dogged by allegations of anti-semitism positions itself as a government-in-waiting

and leading a violent demonstration. In the year he arrived in London, he published an article suggesting that the 'unique mover' behind 9/11 had 'warned 4000 Jews not to go to work' on the day of the attack. One of the reasons Salah was in London in 2011 was that he planned to attend a meeting of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, but he was detained just hours after landing. He was released three days later, under the condition that he would observe a night-time curfew and report to immigration officials. His arrest was ordered by the woman who is now Prime Minister. One of the MPs he had planned to meet at the PSC was the man now poised to be her successor.

In 2012, Jeremy Corbyn insisted that Salah is 'far from a dangerous man'. He called him a 'very honoured citizen', who 'represents his people extremely well'. Salah's voice – one which has continually incited hatred against Jews – is one which, according to Corbyn, 'must be heard'. Of course, this is not an isolated case of anti-semitism within the Labour Party. In 2014, a Labour Party councillor, Vicki Kirby, described Adolf Hitler as a 'Zionist God'.[1] A left-wing activist, Gerry Downing, spoke of the need to 'address the Jewish question'.[2] The former mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, last year argued that Hitler 'supported Zionism before he went mad'.[3] Most famously, the man who now leads the Labour Party referred to Hamas – a terrorist organisation which includes in its charter a hadith which states that 'the Day of Judgement will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews' – as 'friends'.

Many on the Left sincerely believe that their political home has consistently combatted racism and prejudice, and this belief certainly has merit. Furthermore, there

1 www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/mar/15/labour-suspends-activist-vicki-kirby-over-anti-semitism-claims
2 cst.org.uk/news/blog/2016/03/10/gerry-downings-jewish-question
3 www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/05/growing-pressure-on-corbyn-to-sack-ken-livingstone-over-antisemitic-comments

A lot of the anti-semitism in the Labour Party is 'naïve and uneducated'

is a proud tradition of Jews contributing to left-wing activism and thought: Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg were all born in Jewish households, and left-wing Jews such as Helen Suzman were heavily involved in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. In Britain, too, there is a strong tradition of Jewish leftism, perhaps epitomised by the Battle of Cable Street in 1936, in which left-wing Jews clashed with the fascist Blackshirts. And yet, anti-semitism on the Left predates Jeremy Corbyn, and even the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948. But now, as a Labour Party which continues to be dogged by allegations of anti-semitism positions itself as a government-in-waiting, this seemingly absurd phenomenon is more pressing than it has ever been before.

Though it was never a 'dominant tradition', anti-semitism was nonetheless widespread in the nascent Left of 19th Century Europe. So argues Dave Rich, the author of *The Left's Jewish Problem*. An employee of the Community Service Trust (which partners with the Police to keep the Jewish community safe), he wrote a PhD dissertation on left-wing anti-semitism and – upon realising how timely his subject matter was – adapted it into a book, which was published in 2016. Some socialists certainly equated financial elites with Jews, Rich explains, prompting the German Marxist August Bebel to denounce anti-semitism as the 'socialism of fools'. Anti-semitism grew among the British Left at the fin-de-siècle, when a conspiracy theory which suggested that the Boer War was fought by the British on behalf of Jewish diamond merchants and financiers began to gain ground. This, alongside other factors, contributed to the decision made by Trade Unions to support the Aliens Act of 1905, the first immigration control enacted in the UK, aimed to preserve 'England for the English' – to use the slogan of the British Brothers' League – and to ensure that Britain would not become the 'dumping ground for the scum of Europe', by which the BBL meant the large numbers of

Jews who were fleeing the hostile conditions of shtetls in the Pale of Settlements of Czarist Russia.

Anti-semitism continued to animate fringes of the Left well into the 20th Century, occasionally even penetrating high levels of government; indeed, Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary who oversaw the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, 'detested Jews', according to his undersecretary Christopher Mayhew. Furthermore, it would be remiss not to mention that, prior to founding the New Party in 1931 (which eventually became the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists), Oswald Mosley was a Labour Party MP. These people, insists Rich, 'are not anomalies'. 'Anti-semitism functions as a way of explaining the world', he argues, 'and it appeals to people across the political spectrum'. It is not, as is often believed, a disease of the Right; nor is its existence on the Left new or surprising.

The historian Francis Beckett disputes Rich's conclusion, arguing that the Right is the 'historic home' of anti-semitism. Beckett has written biographies of Labour Party figureheads including Clement Attlee and Tony Blair, but he has a more personal connection to the anti-semitism debate, which he explores in his new book, *Fascist in the Family*. His father, John Beckett, was elected as a Labour MP in 1924, but lost his seat in 1931: after visiting Mussolini's Italy, he joined Mosley's British Union of Fascists and later became its Director of Publications. Though both Mosley and Beckett were 'on the left of the Labour Party' in the 1920s, anti-semitism ultimately became the 'centrepiece of their philosophy', prompting them both to 'move to the right on other matters', 'further and further from their socialist roots'. Anti-semitism remains firmly in the domain of the Right, the younger Beckett argues, because it is a useful way of 'convincing the poor and dispossessed' that their situation is 'not the fault of politicians or businesspeople' but of Jews.

Beckett nonetheless agrees that there is anti-semitism in the Labour Party; to claim otherwise, he argues, is
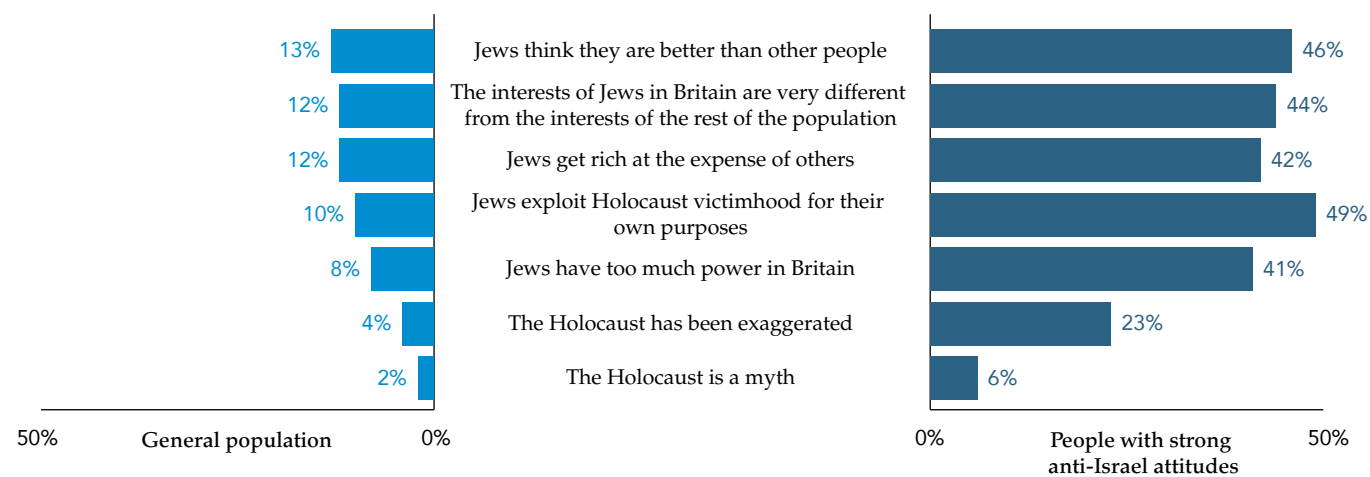
'demonstrably absurd'. The first step to solving this problem, Rich believes, is to 'recognise that there is one'. Antisemites within the party are currently being dealt with as 'rotten apples', ignoring that there is a 'culture of anti-semitism' within the party. 'Few are aware of anti-semitism in left-wing history', Rich fears. 'There is a huge amount of denial'.

Councillor Jeremy Newmark recognises the problem of anti-semitism within his party, but does not believe that it is neglected. He is an observant Jew, as attested by the kippah perched proudly on his head. Before he entered politics, he was the spokesperson of the then-Chief Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks. He is now the Chair of the Jewish Labour Movement. He was selected by the Labour Party as their candidate in Finchley and Golders Green, the constituency with the highest concentration of Jews in the UK, in the last election: his candidacy 'provoked applause but also anger' in the community, according to the Jewish News. He joined the Labour Party when he was a student in the '90s, a time when many Jews feared the 'tangible threat from the extreme right-wing' and 'emerging Islamist extremism' – but viewed the Labour Party of Kinnock, Smith, and Blair, and the political mainstream in general, amicably.

'Anti-semitism exists in the Labour Party'. Newmark is adamant about that. He is also adamant that it is not neglected. 'There have been three separate inquiries in the last 18 months', after all. Newmark does not believe that it is endemic to the party – 'if it was, you wouldn't have John Mann', referring to the Labour MP who chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group Against Anti-semitism. Furthermore, Newmark insists that 'anti-semitism exists in all parties', and uses the case of Aidan Burley, the Conservative MP who in 2011 went to

a stag-do which involved Nazi salutes, to illustrate this point. The party can be 'slow to get to grips' with anti-semitism, he says with visible frustration, but he insists that one should not confuse structural inefficiency with a maliciously lacklustre disinterest in anti-semitism. 'Structures and processes move slowly in politics', and though he wishes his party would act more swiftly against anti-semitism, 'you have to be patient'.

Newmark's candidacy 'received some criticism' from the Jewish community, but he is proud that many young Jewish activists backed his candidacy as their 'first piece of political activism'. Corbyn's Labour is certainly stigmatised in corners of Britain's Jewish community – 1992 had 'shy Tories'; 2017 has 'shy Jewish Labour voters' – but the extent to which Jews now shun Labour is, Newmark feels, often overstated. His party's manifesto 'spoke volumes' to the Jewish community: for example, Diane Abbott increased her vote share significantly by gaining support from the ultra-orthodox community in Stamford Hill, the area with the highest concentration of Haredi Jews in Europe.

Newmark admits that, though many Jews in Finchley and Golders Green were prepared to support him, many were anxious about becoming complicit in a potential Corbyn victory. He makes it clear that he does not think that Corbyn's description of Hamas and Hezbollah as 'friends' was acceptable – 'we must firmly recognise' that these are groups which 'espouse antisemitic and genocidal messages' – but 'we must remember that these comments were made by a renegade opposition politician'. Though he grants 'some credence' to Corbyn's explanation of his comments as an act of diplomacy and 'peace-making', 'it doesn't excuse it'. As for what should be done about anti-semitism in the Labour Party,

Table 1: Endorsement of antisemitic opinions among those with strong anti-Israel attitudes and in the general population of Great Britain (strongly agree and tend to agree combined) %

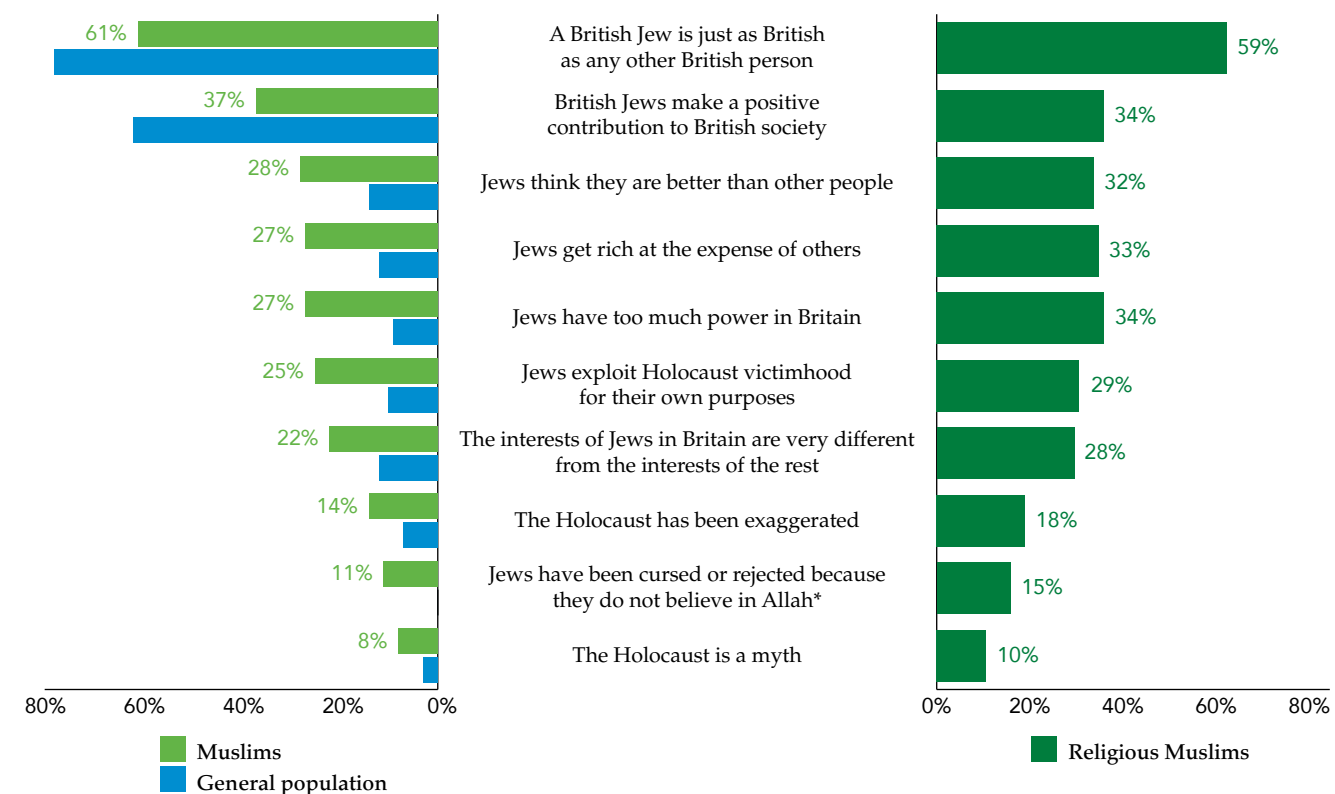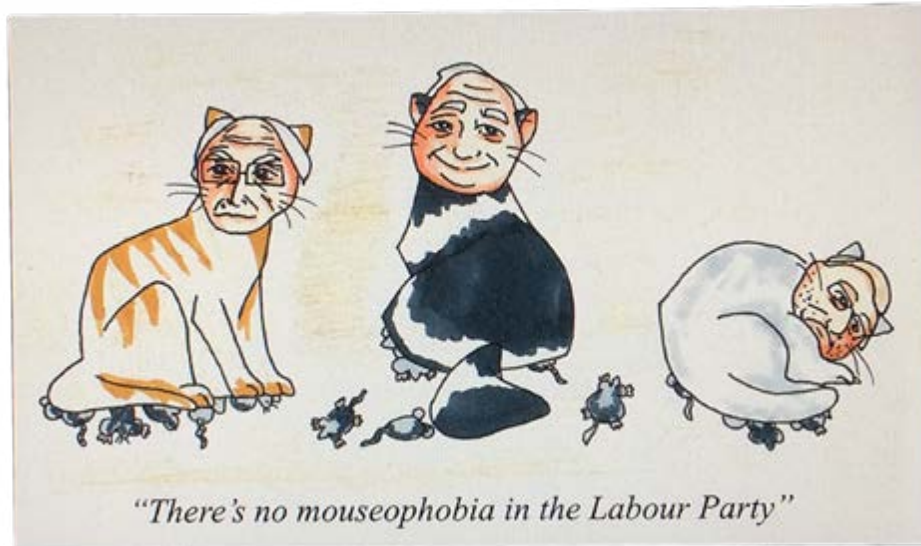**Table 2:** Opinions held by British Muslims about Jews, compared to the general population (strongly agree and tend to agree) %

"There's no mouseophobia in the Labour Party"

Newmark is extremely clear. 'You challenge it! You speak up about it! It's better to reform the party from within than to run away and leave a vacuum that could be filled by antisemites'. A lot of the anti-semitism in the Labour Party is 'naïve and uneducated', and Newmark is passionate in his belief that 'it can be turned around'.

Though the Left undeniably has a history of anti-semitism, it is, of course, impossible to separate its modern incarnations from the issue of Israel. Left-wing attitudes to Israel have 'always been conflicted', argues Rich, but the Six Day War of 1967 – when Israel swiftly defeated its Arab neighbours in a pre-emptive strike – was a 'turning point', after which many on the Left developed an 'underdog sympathy' for the Palestinian cause. This is not by itself sufficient as an explanation for left-wing antizionism; after all, though it is easy to characterise the Left as driven solely by a concern for the underdog, 'parts of the Left support Assad in Syria'. Rather, left-wing antizionism is more the product of a 'Cold War hangover': 'unconditional opposition to America'. Once a party of Atlanticism – a party which insisted that America join NATO, for instance – Labour is now dominated by the 'New Left' which formed in the 1960s, of which Corbyn is representative. The New Left, Rich argues, is 'hostile' towards Israel because it views 'America, and American imperialism, as the root of all evil'.

Newmark, however, believes most 'hard-line antizionism' in the Labour Party – the type of antizionism which is often viewed as possessing antisemitic overtones – 'comes from Jews'. 'Without antizionist Jews, it wouldn't be an issue'. The Director of the Anti-semitism Policy Trust, Danny Stone, agrees. 'Jews have played a significant role in promoting antizionism in Labour', he says. The 'extreme edges' of the Left are often led by 'impassioned Jews renouncing Israel'. Newmark is proud that his party has an 'official relationship' with its Israeli counterpart, and is confident that the Labour Party will ultimately turn to 'where it has been historically: wanting to be taken seriously in the Israel-Palestine debate' by promoting a 'sensible two-state solution'. The relationship between anti-semitism and antizionism

is, though not inherent, 'extremely worrying', argues Stone. The word 'Zionist' has replaced the word 'Jew' in left-wing rhetoric, but the tropes are still the same: people on the Left speak of 'Zionist conspiracies, influence, and power', for instance. He illustrates the connection between anti-semitism and antizionism with a recent study by the Institution for Jewish Policy Research,[4] which proves that 'the more anti-Israel someone is, the more likely they are to agree with antisemitic statements'. Those holding strong antizionist sentiments, for example, are three times as likely to view the Holocaust as wholly fictitious than those who do not, and while 10% of the general population believe that 'Jews exploit Holocaust victimhood for their own purposes', this belief is held by almost half of those who profess 'strong anti-Israel attitudes'. The research proves something else, and something equally sinister: that these trends are even more dramatic in Britain's Muslim community.[5]

In April 2002, Jeremy Corbyn spoke at a rally for Palestine in Trafalgar Square. It was organised by the British branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, an organisation whose professed aim is to remould society according to Sharia law. The Palestinian wing of the Muslim Brotherhood goes under a different name: Hamas, a group universally recognised as terrorist and antisemitic in nature. Some marchers at this rally were 'dressed as suicide bombers'. Others waved 'banners equating the Star of David with the swastika'. The JPR's numbers are clear: British Muslims are far more likely to hold antisemitic views than non-Muslims. While only 8% of the general population believe that 'Jews have too much power in Britain', this view is harboured by 27% of Muslims. Unsurprisingly, this trend is exaggerated when one specifically examines those who identify as 'religious Muslims': 10% of religious Muslims believe the Holocaust to be a 'myth', their research shows, and almost a third believe that 'Jews get rich at the expense of others'. Stone 'does not doubt' that 'some left-wing discourse is influenced by radical Islam', and expresses concerns about 'connections between the far-left and the Muslim Brotherhood'.

This 'new alliance' is both terrifying and bizarre: no 'conscientious leftist', Rich writes, 'would agree with the contents of the article by Azzam Tamimi' that was handed out at the Trafalgar Square rally. This article stated that 'non-Muslims should have fewer rights than Muslims'; that Muslims should 'not have the freedom to leave the faith'; and that those who do should be treated as 'apostates and traitors', at risk of 'execution'. Perhaps only one feature of the rally was supported by both the left-wing activists and the radical Muslims present: the burning of a 'huge American flag' in the middle of Trafalgar Square.[6] Radical Islam and the Left are united

4 cst.org.uk/news/blog/2017/09/12/cst-and-jpr-produce-major-new-study-of-anti-semitism-in-great-britain
5 cst.org.uk/public/data/file/7/4/JPR.2017.Anti-semitism%20in%20contemporary%20Great%20Britain.pdf
6 Rich, Dave. *The Left's Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel and Anti-Semitism*. Biteback Publishing, 2016, pp.159-163

The New Left is 'hostile' towards Israel because it views 'America, and American imperialism, as the root of all evil'

by a common foe: America, its 'imperialism', and Israel, its exhibition of liberal capitalism in the heart of the Islamic world. This alliance has caused the antisemitic beliefs of radical Muslims to trickle into mainstream left-wing discourse.

Rich is certain that the prevalence of anti-semitism on the Left has caused an increase in 'antisemitic abuse on social media'. Jews in the Labour Party, such as the MPs Luciana Berger and Ruth Smeeth, have both been 'bombarded by antisemitic abuse online'. Fortunately, 'most Jews go through life without ever experiencing anti-semitism', Stone says, but the CST used to view 100 incidents a month as 'exceptional'. Now that's 'standard'. Stone is especially wary of the 'cross-pollination of ideas' that social media facilitates. Ideas that were once firmly in the realm of the far-right, such as Holocaust

Luciana Berger, Labour MP for Liverpool Wavertree, was applauded by MPs from all sides in the House of Commons after her speech revealing the anti-Semitic abuse she had faced.

denial, have gained ground on the Left. John Mann, with whom Stone works closely, often gets asked 'who's your Zionist paymaster?': 'without realising it, the Left is falling for far-right tropes'. One of the most rewarding aspects of his job, Stone thinks, is 'getting to influence social media legislation'. The internet, he fears, is now the 'home of hate-crime'.

What infuriates Stone the most is the assumption that Jews cannot be victims of hate-crime because they are, according to the antisemitic worldview many on the Left possess, 'responsible for society's imperialist and capitalist ills'. The General Secretary of Unite the Union, Len McCluskey, is straight, white, male, and – crucially – not Jewish. The same can be said of the film director, Ken Loach. Neither one of these representatives of the Labour Left would dare claim that sexism, homophobia, or racism within their party are not only fictitious, but part of a sinister conspiracy. And yet, according to McCluskey, claims of anti-semitism in his party 'were created by people who were trying to undermine Jeremy Corbyn'. Ken Loach finds it 'funny that these stories suddenly appeared when Corbyn became leader'. This is a clear violation of the Macpherson Principle, which states that the victim should be allowed to define what counts as prejudice against them; figures from the Left

abide by this maxim in all other cases, to such an extent that it has become a cornerstone of contemporary left-wing philosophy. And yet, influential left-wing figures like McCluskey and Loach do not seem to believe that prejudice against Jews even exists, and as such, Rich explains, Jews are 'denied the privilege of defining what anti-semitism is'. After all, in the eyes of the Left, Jews are 'rich, white, and Tory': 'supporters of racism', and never the victims of it.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that Newmark is optimistic about the future of the Labour Party. He recognises a 'strong potential' to 'put the problem of anti-semitism to bed over time', and views the 'significant number of Jewish councillors' as an 'insurance policy' against Labour's problems 'growing even further'. Newmark has reason to be confident: just months ago, at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton, an amendment put forth by the JLM which toughened rules against anti-semitism within the party was enshrined in its constitution. This does not reassure either Stone or Rich, however. It's 'good that the Labour Party has strengthened the rules', argues Rich, but 'rules are only fine if you have a problem of random individuals doing bad things'. A 'pattern of thinking and behaviour' exists in the Labour Party, and it is not one which 'rules alone can address'. Furthermore, says Stone, the party leadership must 'take a clearer stance against anti-semitism in the party'. Until it does, Stone is 'not confident or optimistic about Labour'.

Much of the Left, which was once at the forefront of tackling prejudice, has become the monster it has so sorely sought to destroy. Beckett describes his father's contraction of anti-semitism as a 'tragedy'; Rich would argue that so, too, is the history of the Left. It was the Left which fought the Blackshirts, the Left which campaigned against the Jim Crow laws, and the Left which dismantled apartheid in South Africa. And yet, as a Labour Party emboldened by recent electoral success – a party drunk on antisemitic discourse – sets its eyes on Downing Street, many in the Jewish community feel a profound anxiety. Much like the inhabitants of Umm al-Fahm, they fear that doomsday is just around the corner.

Aztec battle: Conquistadors defend Tenochtitlan

Aztecs and Incas:
the Empire does not Strike Back

Ali Muminoglu wonders why the Aztecs and the Incas were overrun

It is difficult to see past the sheer numerical improbability of the Spanish conquests in the Americas. The success of a few hundred men against two of the largest and most well-organised empires of the age seems like something out of a poorly written action movie. But the disparity of numbers between the opposing sides conceals an integral weakness that existed within both empires – the emphasis placed on the emperor as an ideological and religious point of loyalty, and the over-important role the emperor played in the running of both states. In their conquests of both the Aztec and the Inca empires, the Spanish used this structural weakness to their advantage, and all their other advantages were directed specifically towards a hijacking of New World systems of rulership.

In their conquests of the New World, the Spanish had several undeniable advantages. The majority of these were in terms of military technology. Both Cortes and Pizarro had relatively small contingents of cavalry with them – horses were not native to the Americas, and as such, both the Aztecs and the Incas would have been caught by surprise. As well as having no specialised

tactics to counter the threat of cavalry, none of the peoples of the New World had ever seen horses, and as such, the psychological impact of cavalry in combat would have been immense, at least initially. Likewise, the widespread use of cannon and arquebuses by the Spanish was completely alien to the Incas and the Aztecs, and they had neither the tactical nor the psychological familiarity with these weapons necessary to mount an effective resistance to them, at least in the first few engagements with Spanish forces. The Spanish also had the advantage of steel weapons and armour, which gave them considerable superiority over their New World enemies, man-for-man.

All of these factors not only gave the Spanish dominance of the battlefield, but they also added to the shock and surprise they brought as completely new and unfamiliar outsiders. Diseases such as smallpox were a massive influence on the success of these conquests, decimating populations and causing general disarray. These advantages were potent, but they did not offset the sheer numerical superiority the Aztecs and the Incas enjoyed. The Incas frequently raised armies of tens of thousands of troops,[1] and the standard Aztec military

unit consisted of 8,000 men.[2] Both empires could bring armies of hundreds of thousands to bear, and frequent war and expansion left no shortage of experienced warriors. Even with their technological superiority, a few hundred Spaniards would have been crushed in a purely military campaign. Even smallpox, widely recognised as a key component of the conquests' long-term success, might have been overcome with the careful central control that had been developed in both empires.[3] The only explanation for the effectiveness of the initial Spanish conquests is the careful targeting of the Aztec and the Inca leadership. It was the nature of Aztec and Inca leadership structures, and the role of the emperor in both empires, that allowed the Spanish to succeed in the face of such staggering odds.

It makes sense to start with the Aztecs, both logically, since Pizarro's strategy was highly derivative of Cortes' actions in Mexico,[4] and chronologically. Cortes held

> It was the nature of Aztec and Inca leadership structures... that allowed the Spanish to succeed in the face of such staggering odds

Montezuma hostage in Tenochtitlan for the eight months he spent there. In this time, the Aztec empire was essentially without its emperor – Montezuma could attend feasts, make sacrifices and engage in the ceremonial aspects of imperial rule, but his political actions were controlled by Cortes,[5] and as such, his capacity for strong, independent rulership was neutered. This had a morale effect on the Aztecs and on Aztec society – the emperor had a key religious significance, and his captivity at the hands of completely alien strangers was perturbing.[6] Furthermore, Montezuma's captivity paralysed the Aztec succession, as he was still technically the emperor, meaning that another emperor could not be chosen while he was still alive without risk of triggering a civil war. The socio-religious importance of the emperor meant that without him, it was difficult for the Aztecs to organise a coherent policy of resistance. But Montezuma's lack of political power and capacity had wider repercussions outside of Tenochtitlan.

The Aztec empire depended on a series of loosely controlled client kingdoms within Mexico. The continued subservience of these kingdoms and their existence within the Aztec empire was not a simple matter of military domination. The obedience of client kingdoms was characterised most heavily by the tribute to Tenochtitlan which allowed the empire to function.[7] Often, it was a negotiated deal, and was thus dependent on the client kingdoms' appraisal of the Aztec emperor's power and authority.[8] This also explains a key division that occurred during Montezuma's time as a hostage. In the face of Montezuma's weakness under Spanish control, King Cacama, of the city of Tetzcoco, allied with several other kings in a bid to overthrow Montezuma and rid the empire of Spanish control.[9] This rebellion was crushed, but it was indicative of Aztec systems of control crumbling with the inaction of the emperor.

While Montezuma was under his control, Cortes was also able to order the swearing of fealty, imprisonment and execution of Aztec nobles through him.[10]

In this way, the Spanish in Mexico were able to damage and degrade the Aztec leadership structure to such an extent that loyalty to the Aztec regime eventually evaporated in favour of allegiance to Cortes and his perceived position of power. Because the person of the emperor himself was so essential to the continued functioning of the empire, Cortes' effective neutering of the Aztec leadership structure led to a breakdown of Aztec control over the subject kingdoms of the empire.

1 www.ancient.eu/Inca_Warfare/

2 Ross Hessig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest*, (Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited, 1994), 24.
3 Hugh Thomas, *The Conquest Of Mexico*, (London: Pimlico, 1994), 20-21.
4 Hubert Herring, *A History of Latin America*, (Random House Inc., 1961), 138.
5 Hugh Thomas, op.cit., 310-312.
6 Hugh Thomas, op.cit., 308-309
7 Serge Gruzinski, *The Aztecs: Rise and Fall of an Empire* (London: Gallimard, 1992), 44-45.
8 Ross Hessig, op.cit., 88-89.
9 Ibid
10 Hugh Thomas, op.cit., 309.

This meant that Aztec resistance to the Spanish was reduced effectively enough that a force of allied natives with a spearhead of technologically advanced Spanish soldiers could viably take control of the Aztec empire. The military advantages the Spanish had come into play most effectively in these two contexts. The military technology the Spanish had was most effective in Tenochtitlan, keeping the emperor hostage, where the Aztecs could not bring their numerical superiority to bear, and as an elite core for an army composed of newly allied natives, a strategy that was most effective after a breakdown in Aztec leadership. The often cited advantages of the Spanish were only effective because they were suited to targeting the fundamentally flawed Aztec leadership structure.

Pizarro's conquest of the Inca empire seems more impressive on a surface level – he had at his disposal 168 foot soldiers and 63 cavalry, a smaller contingent than Cortes had. But the Inca leadership structure was possibly even more flawed than that of the Aztecs, and thus even more easily exploitable by the Spanish. A key distinction to be made here is the comparative loyalty of the Incas to Atahualpa when he was captured by the Spanish. While holding Atahualpa hostage, Pizarro demanded that an entire room be filled to its height with gold, and two with silver. The Inca population complied with this extortionate request. The reason for such obedience in the face of the capture of their emperor stemmed from the Inca emperor's religious significance. The dominant religion of the Inca empire was the cult of the sun god, Inti. The emperor, the Sapa Inca, was considered to be a direct descendant of Inti, and was worshipped accordingly by even the most noble of his subjects.[11] This religious significance was not merely nominal: the gravity with which the Inca treated their cult of the sun god was evidenced by the common practice of child sacrifice. The heightened religious importance of the imperial head of state made the shortcomings of the Inca leadership system easier to exploit, and the rule of the empire easier to hijack, than their Aztec counterparts.

Predominantly as a result of Atahualpa's divine status, the Inca nobility that remained in power after the 'battle' at Cajamarca in 1532 were wont to take any action against the Spanish, for fear of the emperor being killed.[12] Cajamarca is a key example of Spanish military advantages being important, but not as essential as the weakness of Incan leadership structures. At Cajamarca, Pizarro and his small force were able to slaughter thousands of unarmed Inca attendants and capture Atahualpa, having greeted him within the city. The Spanish advantages of steel, horses and gunpowder were incredibly effective in this scenario because they were used to decapitate the Inca leadership without having to engage the 80,000 veteran warriors encamped outside, who routed when they learned of the capture of the emperor and the death of a significant chunk of the ruling class. Pizarro extended this paralysis of leadership among the Inca, appointing successive brothers of Atahualpa, while occupying Cusco, the Inca capital, in

Hernán Fernando Cortés

1533, one year after Cajamarca. The fact that Pizarro was able to maintain Spanish control over the Inca empire for an entire year with successive emperors as hostages is a clear example of the ideological loyalty the Sapa Inca commanded, and an example of how the Spanish were able to succeed specifically by exploiting this Achilles heel. Pizarro's capture of Cusco, the Inca capital, would likely have not succeeded if there had been a clear leader to rally defences around. But due to the crippling flaws in the Inca leadership structure, no effective and widespread resistance could take place.

Both the Aztec and the Inca empires were regional superpowers. They had established respective hegemonies that gave them complete dominance of their political spheres. Both had thriving bodies of central organisation and power that led to the considerable successes that both empires undeniably achieved. By no means were they primitive. However, their leadership structures were specifically tailored towards their own political paradigms. The predominant concern of both empires was internal stability under the emperor, and so it made sense to focus all loyalties upon that emperor, practically and ideologically. There was no contingency plan for a surgical strike against the very heart of the leadership structures of either empire, and as a result,

11 Carmen Bernand, *The Incas: Empire of Blood and Gold*, (London: Gallimard, 1988), 25.
12 Hubert Herring, op. cit., 139.

Incan Civilisation : Machu Picchu Sunrise by Allard Schmidt (CC-BY-SA-3.0 via Wikimedia Commons)

control of the emperor in both states (to whatever extent that term is applicable) was a sure method of establishing near complete control, at least for a time. The Spanish advantages in terms of military technology and psychological shock lose their significance when measured purely against the vast numbers of warriors able to be fielded by these empires, but in a concerted assault on the nerve centre of governmental control, it is not difficult to see how they effected a key difference, and were directly conducive to Spanish efforts.

It was not simply cannons, or horses, or even smallpox that made the Spanish conquests in the New World possible. It was the application of those advantages against top-heavy leadership structures with a hyper-inflated importance placed on the emperor. Both Montezuma and Atahualpa were made the strings of Spanish puppeteers, used to control their empires on behalf of Cortes and Pizarro, and the fact that the leadership structures of both empires facilitated this was the reason for Spanish success.

Homeland Lost or Homeland Gained?

Gabriel Allason charts the latter days of the infamous spy, Kim Philby

Just before dawn on the night of 23 January 1963 a lone figure wearing a Westminster scarf could be seen on deck of the Russian freighter Dolmatova as she departed out to sea from Beirut bound for Odessa. He had a glass of cognac in his hand. The ship had left in haste and some of her cargo was left lying on the quayside. The identity card of the man on deck stated that he was a Latvian seaman called Villi Maris. In fact, the real Maris was lying unconscious in a bar having been plied with alcohol by a Russian intelligence officer. The man was actually the notorious spy, Kim Philby, who was 'doing a fade' and, having been identified as a double agent, escaping to Russia. He later wrote that, as he watched dawn break over the receding bay he knew that 'the last link with England had been severed forever'. In July 1963 Kim Philby was granted soviet citizenship and *Izvestia*, the official Soviet newspaper ran the headline 'HELLO MR PHILBY'. His new homeland would be the USSR.

Born in 1912 in India, Harold Adrian 'Kim' Philby was a high-ranking member of British intelligence who worked as a double agent before defecting in 1963. He served as both a NKVD and KGB operative at the same time as working for the British intelligence service. A communist sympathiser at Cambridge University, he began working as a KGB informer in the mid-1930s in London. He reported to the Soviet NKVD from the Spanish Civil War under the guise of being a correspondent for *The Times* and, in 1940, joined the Secret Intelligence Service or MI6 going onto work in high level positions across Europe, in Istanbul, and America. As a double agent, his work led to the deaths of dozens of spies as well as many others including Konstantin Volkov, a NKVD agent who requested asylum in Britain in 1945 but was betrayed by Philby. He also betrayed hundreds of the so called Albanian pixies, guerrillas who were trying to liberate their country from the communists. When two of the notorious 'Cambridge spies' – Burgess and Maclean- were revealed in 1951 and fled to Russia, Philby was suspected but eventually officially cleared by Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan. In November 1955 Philby gave a press conference in which he calmly and confidently declared 'I have never been a communist'.

The rumours of a 'third man' in the spy ring, however, continued. When in 1961 Anatoliy Golitsyn, a major in the KGB defected to the United States, Philby, then living in Beirut, showed signs that he knew his cover had been broken. Eventually he was confronted by his old friend and co- spy Nicholas Elliott and gave a partial confession. There have been two diametrically opposed versions of Philby's subsequent escape from British justice. In one version, he bamboozled the British by escaping when their backs were turned. A second more plausible version is that he was allowed to escape because the British Government wanted to avoid another high-profile spy scandal and the potential result of Philby being condemned to hang. Ben Macintyre has concluded that Philby left Beirut thinking he had jumped but later came to believe he had been pushed.

Kim Philby lived out the rest of his days in Russia, dying in 1988. Many of his friends in the British intelligence service remained dumbfounded by his betrayal. Unlike Burgess, an alcoholic homosexual and Maclean, a Russian speaking bureaucrat, Philby was an insider. Educated at Westminster and Cambridge he was urbane, charming and clubbable, a quintessential Englishman. Many attempts have been made to analyse his motives for betraying his country and to discover whether his communist idealism survived the experience of living under a soviet regime for over 25 years. Although Philby himself frequently insisted that when he reached Russia he 'came home' and that he had never comfortably fitted into British Society, there is evidence that he did not truly gain a homeland. Instead he tried to convince himself and others that he had not lost a world he valued.

Philby was welcomed to Moscow by the KGB and installed in a flat luxurious by Russian standards and a salary of about £200 per month. A minder was appointed to guard him and accompanied him everywhere. He was promised that his children would be financially supported back in Britain. His third wife Eleanor, whom he had abandoned in Beirut, eventually flew out to join him. The KGB purchased two of Philby's favourite pipes on Jermyn Street and shipped to Moscow in the diplomatic bag. Each week copies of *The Times* arrived which he carefully ironed and pored over accounts of cricket matches. He ate toast with thick cut English marmalade, listened to the World service and delighted when his children visited and brought Colman's mustard, Marmite and Worcestershire sauce. Philby wore a tweed jacket in hound's-tooth check and a woollen tie. He always took English tea at 5pm from a porcelain cup and he drank huge quantities of Johnnie Walker Whiskey. He moaned about modern life and morals including the 'ghastly din of modern music' and the new ways of cricket 'Aluminium

Soviet postage stamp commemorating 'the Soviet Intelligence Officer Kim Philby'

bats, white balls, funny clothes…It is all too confusing for a gentleman of the old school like myself'. Philby's granddaughter, Charlotte Philby. has written about family visits to a modest flat in Moscow where they would play chess and eat marmite spread on heavy black bread.

Yet, as Macintyre has written 'Kim Philby did not love Moscow and Moscow did not love him although both tried to pretend otherwise'. He had arrived believing he was joining an elite force but in fact was given no KGB rank. He was an agent, not an officer in the KGB's eyes and moreover of little further use. On the surface, however, Philby seemed to cling to the political idealism of his new homeland. When his wife Eleanor asked him, what was more important to him – his family or the Communist Party, he immediately responded 'The party, of course'. He demanded admiration for his ideological consistency and for 'having stayed the course'. As the Cold War raged, Philby was used as a propaganda tool by the Russians allegedly living a life of 'blissful peace'. An article in *Pravda* in 2004 report that from 1976 Comrade Kim would regularly give seminars to groups of young people studying Britain and provide 'an ABC of free communication with different kinds of Englishmen'. It alleges that 'In contrast to a widespread stereotype about Kim Philby in the West, he taught them to work not against Britain, the US but how to study them'. The article ends by reporting Philby saying in emotional terms in a speech in 1977 that from 'his younger years had been on the side of the poor, weak and disinherited in their opposition to the rich, strong and unprincipled, and he saw a just social and political force in the USSR.

It has been argued that during the 1930s the Cambridge circle of spies decided to serve the Soviet State because they saw it as bulwark against Nazism and fascism. In the Second World War, they acted in response to the fact that Britain and the USSR were allies and during the Cold War they viewed the USA as the chief threat to world peace. Above all, it has been claimed, that the spies had an overriding commitment to communism which was more important to them than loyalty to King, country and friends. The only choice, it has been suggested, given that idealism, would be to wholeheartedly embrace the political ideology of a new homeland. Yet this does not seem to be the case. Philby was the only one of the spies to have written a book length account of his espionage, *My Silent War* published in 1968 in the West with KGB approval. The final words to the introduction read 'how, where and when I became a member of Soviet Intelligence is a matter for myself and my comrades. I will only say that, when the proposition was made to me, I did not hesitate. One does not look twice at an offer of enrolment in an elite force'. There is no mention of ideological commitment but more suggestion of a personal ambition to become part of an elite in the country he believed would become the dominant power in the world. His defection was perhaps driven by wanting to switch from a declining to a rising power.

The reality of his new life was more complex. Philby's wife Eleanor did not stay long in Russia. Ironically, she soon discovered he was having an affair with Melinda, Donald Maclean's wife and returned to her home country, America. The relationship with Melinda did not last. During the next few years Philby was deeply unhappy. He drank heavily and later admitted his life was so burdensome he tried to slash his wrists. Then in 1970 Philby was introduced by fellow spy George Blake to Rufina Pukhova, a Russian Pole, and proposed three weeks later. The KGB sent them a tea set of English bone chine as a wedding present. Eventually they were allowed to travel to Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Cuba and Poland – and when ill health prevented long distance travel, the KGB gave Philby a dacha outside Moscow. Philby was awarded the Order of Lenin which he compared to a knighthood. He never criticised the system he had supported throughout his adult life or showed any remorse. As Macintyre writes, 'In the officially approved Soviet style he maintained that any errors in practical communism lay not with the ideas but with the people executing them'.

In an interview Pukhova gave in 2011 she revealed 'Kim believed in a just society and devoted his whole life to communism. And here he was struck by disappointment, brought to tears. He said, 'Why do old people live so badly here? After all, they won the war'. In 2004 she was forced to sell his library and other memorabilia at Sotheby's because her pension was so small.

Philby died in a Moscow hospital in May 1988. He was given a grand funeral with a KGB guard of honour and lauded for his 'tireless struggle in the cause of peace and a brighter future'. He was commemorated with a Soviet postage stamp and in 2011 the Russian foreign intelligence service put up a plaque of two faces of Kim Philby facing one another. He himself described Russia as his homeland and wrote that 'to betray you must first belong'. Yet one KGB officer who knew Philby well commented that he remained 'An Englishman to his fingertips' and Philby himself admitted that he was 'wholly and irreversibly English'. When Eleanor left Moscow to return to life in the West, Kim Philby gave her his most prized possession – his Westminster School scarf.

> Philby left Beirut thinking he had jumped but later came to believe he had been pushed

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Is Islam more Dangerous than any other Religion?

Neer Singhal gets behind misunderstandings and misconceptions of Islam and investigates why it is seen as dangerous

Since 9/11, Islam has been at the forefront of conversations regarding terrorism and violence. Whether one might confirm the reputation of Islam as the most dangerous religion or whether its presentation in the media has altered perceptions will be the discussion here. It is, of course, striking to associate religion with danger. The most important idea to distinguish is between 'conventional Muslims', who follow Allah, go to Mosque and encourage peaceful values, and 'radical, unconventional Muslims', who adhere to some ambiguous, perverse variation on conventional Islam, and try to achieve their aims through force. Therein lies the sense of danger and violence.

According to *The Encyclopaedia of Wars*, some seven per cent of all wars were waged in the name of religion and over half of these were waged in the name of Islam. In the 21st century, however, these acts of violence are much more frequent and intense, as death tolls increase. However, physical violence is not the only metric by which danger is measured. The psychological impact of Islamic extremist is incomparable to the impact from other religions. The lives of everyone who resides in

an area deemed to be an 'enemy of Islam and Islamic values' are moulded by the threat of Islamic extremism. My mother was in central London during the false terrorist scare in Oxford Circus on 24 November 2017. She recounted that as the news of the proclaimed terrorist attack emerged, people ran in panic, hiding, crying, and convinced that family members were dead. Tube stations shut down and the whole of London seemed to be at standstill. There was not even a terror attack…this example epitomises the significance of the mere threat or notion of Islamic extremism and highlights the fear and psychological effect that it now exerts.

Even without the threat of terrorist attacks themselves, the mere history and values of Islamic extremism is 'dangerous' in unweaving the fabric of a multicultural, accepting, and diverse society. Islamic extremism has been significant in the West-East divide and the feud between Western and Islamic values. Many people, both Western and Islamic, have wrongly seen Bush's "war on terror" as 'a war on Islam' or 'a war on conventional Islamic values'. It has paved the path for increasing intolerance and Islamophobia, which not only hinders

the wellbeing of Muslims living in the US and UK, but also compromises the freedom-loving, all-accepting values upon which Western people pride themselves – it imperils the very thing that defines 21st century Western civilisation. Thus, an intolerance of Islamic culture may be responsible for the ban of the burqa in France and the ban of the full-face veil in Belgium. Regardless of whether these bans are the 'right thing to do', they have stirred so much controversy that their ban seems to have deepened the Western-Islamic divide. Indeed, the burkini, which despite allowing a woman's face to be seen, is banned for its affiliations with Islam. This shows that what originally arose from Islamic extremism has now developed into a fully-fledged war on values.

There is confusion and sometimes a lack of distinction between 'Islamic extremism', as opposed to simply 'Islam'. It is problematic that, 'conventional Muslims' follow the same process of identifying their values and beliefs as those of perverse variations. Both forms of Islam were built on analysis of the teachings in the Qur'an. From a European point of view, it seems rational that extreme Islam, whose foundations are built on violence and terror, is not linked with conventional Islam. But how has such an interpretation become accepted? How can we authoritatively denounce the so-called perverse variations of Islam as unconventional? There are many core Muslim values that support the so-called conventional Islam – the Prophet Muhammed explains that one should not harm oneself or others. Similarly, one can find scriptures that support more 'fundamentalist' variations of Islam – For example, the Qur'an states: "slay them wherever ye find them...and fight them until fitnah is no more, and religion is for Allah." In this sense, it is understandable that some verses in the Qur'an advocate the use of violence and terror to promote Islam and Allah as the true God. Like the Bible, the Qur'an is susceptible to different interpretations. These variations emerge as a result of apparent contradictions in the teachings and scriptures and, since the suppression of the caliphate by the Turkish Republic in 1924, the absence of an overarching authority to promulgate one reading. One key difference, though, is that, extremists, or radicals, seek to impose a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture allied to oppressive, political aims.

> **Extremists, or radicals, seek to impose a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture allied to oppressive, political aims**

Religion has been instrumentalised for political ends in Islamic countries and many political conflicts have slipped into religious wars. The Iran-Iraq war is one of many examples, where the line between the political differences and religious differences became clouded. The question that logically follows asks whether we ought to blame Islamic politicians or the religion of Islam for this haziness. Why is Islam the only religion that is so deeply entrenched within politics? Islamic theology promotes a social way of life; it has political resonance, primarily through the sharia law, Islam's legal system. In short, in the Islamic world sharia law is the truthful way to live a good life and in relationship with God. In the West, it is often narrowly associated with human rights infringements or punishments; this is to misunderstand its importance. Sharia law codifies social behaviour and is part of everyday way of life, a pillar of the Islamic political system.

It is unsurprising, then, that Muslim politics and society should be viewed through the prism of sharia law. Many extremists hold that sharia is superior to and incompatible with democracy in the West. The core political values in the West stand in contradiction to those values that extremist Muslims believe the Quran promotes. Both groups disagree with the others' values; extremists resort to violence in an attempt to impose their views. However, the primary goal of Western opposition to religious extremism is not to conquer differing values, but to defend their own populations from extremist aggression and imposition of unacceptable rules. Western politics is not to blame for the surge in terror attacks.

In contrast to what many outside observers may think, Islam is not innocently caught up or (mis)used for geopolitical advantage – in fact, it is at the core of geopolitics. As history shows, religion is significant in social conflicts, as it has often acted as the means of demarcating alliances and peoples, thereby increasing potential friction. Conflict between Catholics and Protestants has arisen in Northern Ireland and the religious difference has been the main source of demarcation between communities. On a more extreme level, the Protestant-Catholic feud of the Thirty Years' War (1618 – 1648) led to the deaths of some 10 million people. Similarly, friction between Sunni and Shias has been at the heart of countless conflicts and has divided peoples and catalysed tensions and wars: the Saudi-Iranian tension is one of the most recent. Evidently, all religions with variations and sects have internal feuds that escalate friction into political conflict.

The fact that we have had to discuss the danger of Islam in such depth demonstrates the scale of its danger and impact on the lives of all people, from religious leaders to non-religious civilians. There must be some underlying reason why Islam is continuously at war with other values, religions and governments – Islam is the common denominator of religion-fuelled turmoil, since the Crusades against the Christians, (although the

Outer entrance of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque, Abu Dhabi.

Demonstration against President Trump's decision to ban travellers from Muslim countries Photo: Peg Hunter SFO Airport, 28 January 2017 (Flickr)

Christians were perhaps more responsible for aggression here), the violence during India-Pakistan partition against Hindus/Indians. Although other religions have been involved in war occasionally, Islam cannot say the same.

The world's main religions may be split into two categories: Abrahamic and Indian religions. At the base of all Indian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism) is the concept of pluralism, the idea that all religions are acceptable (note the distinction between acceptable and tolerable) and seek the same goal to reach some form of enlightenment, beatific vision of God or spirituality. The way they analogise this is by explaining that all religions are simply different paths up the same mountain, with the same peak. They are different means to the same goal. As a result of Indian religions' acceptance of other religions and ideas, they are involved in few religious wars, allowing for occasional lapses. As opposed to the Abrahamic religions that impose the superiority of one God, Indian religions do not claim to have a monopoly on the truth of one God: Hinduism and Sikhism are polytheistic, while Buddhists reject metaphysical speculation. Perhaps this is one factor why Abrahamic religions cause more violence and wars than Indian religions. Christianity, for example, could be held responsible for mass death in the Crusades, support of slavery and anti-Semitic violence. Principles in the Old Testament such as 'an eye for an eye' and support for strong violent punishments, have resonated through the ages. All Abrahamic religions promote violence in their scriptures at some point. All the historical violence committed by the Hebrews and recorded in the Old Testament is just that – history. It happened; God

commanded it. But it revolved around a specific time and place and was directed against a specific people. At no time did such violence go on to become standardised or codified into Jewish law. In short, biblical accounts of violence are descriptive, not prescriptive.

This is where Islamic violence is unique. Though similar to the violence in the Old Testament, certain aspects of Islamic violence have become standardised in Islamic law and applied at all times. Thus, while the violence found in the Qur'an has an historical context, its ultimate significance is political. Extremist interpretations of Wahhabism and Salafism have been amongst the foremost to promote violence and fanaticism, focusing on the sword-verses as well as a selective reading of other Qur'anic verses and hadith, to insist that Islam is at perpetual war with the non-Muslim world until the former subsumes the latter. Such a narrow reading has been accompanied by intense indoctrination from these radical groups.

In the 21st century, much of the religious violence stems from Islamic extremism as opposed to 'conventional' Islam. The danger is not just the threat of violence, but also one which targets social integration and the way in which opponents of Islamic extremism live and think. This attacks the foundations of Western liberalism. Islamic extremism has sought to challenge and reject the society on which the West prides itself: multiculturalism, diversity, and tolerance. Extremism risks normalising racism and Islamophobia and thus corroding social harmony, in an attempt to undermine core Western values. In that, Islamic extremism represents a unique danger.

Nation States: where did they come from and where will they go?

Gabriel Doherty discusses the Nation State and 16th century France

The idea of the nation state is highly charged. Nigel Farage, referring to Brexit and Trump's election, proclaimed 2016 a victory for 'nation-state democracy', while many on the left reject the very idea of the nation state as 'an obsolete fiction.'[1] Those with nationalistic tendencies rally around the idea of a nation state, while those of an internationalist persuasion (perhaps embarrassed by elements of their country) often reject it. But what are nation states and how were they born? Crucially, what does the emergence and resurgence of the nation state have to tell us about the future of international cooperation?

'Nation-state' captures both the physical and intangible elements of what it is to be a country. The quantifiable element is made up of shared laws, institutions, and government. This is the state. The intangible nation describes a people, with feelings of kinship and a common culture. So the nation can rise up against the state, and the crown can embody the nation and be head of state. The nation-state is thus the coming together of two distinct though heavily linked strands, one top down, the other popular.

The first modern nation-state of them all was France, and from the late 15th to early 17th centuries she advanced at an unprecedented pace with no template to follow. Her development was at once ground breaking and incremental, and it defines the European idea of the nation-state today. It was built around a strong, centralised government largely able to surmount regional, noble, and political opposition and developing the institutions of a state up and down the country. The movement from a fragmented nation and weak state to a (relatively) territorially, politically and emotionally unified nation-state in little over a century is remarkable. How did it happen?

War did much to shape the development of the French nation-state, defining French policy between 1494 and 1559, and again post 1595. In the period 1494-1559 France spent over 30 years actively at war with the Hapsburgs and Italian states, and the other years were enforced breaks when credit ran low. The costs of war were huge, both in terms of people and finance – Henry II ultimately went bankrupt in the 1550s. Yet these costs had consequences that would help shape the Europe we recognise today.

The state grew in size, scope and reach to meet the obscene demands of war. Louis XII created eight gens de finance (tax supervisors) to oversee tax collection across the country. Francis I went further creating the first national treasury in 1523, doubling taxes and drastically

Portrait of Henri II (Wikicommons)

Portrait of François 1er (Google Art Project)

increasing the number of royal officials to forty thousand. Efforts to introduce new taxes were less successful, but hint at a new scope to royal ambition; a salt tax (the gabelle) was introduced in 1542 by Francis, and again in 1548 by Henry II, but withdrawn both times because of popular revolt. With the proliferation of royal officials the crown had agents across France who were obliged to provide funds for the crown. Henry IV pursued a similar policy when faced with enormous debts towards the end of the Wars of Religion (1562-1598). The financial strains of war were a fundamental reason for the extension of the state's tentacles into the provinces.

As the state grew, the nation came together in the face of a common enemy. After Francis I's great victory at Marignano (1515) and his reoccupation of Milan, there were spontaneous national celebrations across his kingdom. It was only after the peace of Le Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) that domestic order collapsed, and civil war broke out.

The national concord throughout the Italian Wars was such that successive kings were able to challenge the nobility's domestic influence. Noble aggression and their chivalric ambitions were channelled abroad. It had not always been so. Even at the end of the 15th century noble disruption remained dangerous; for three years many leading nobles – including Louis d'Orleans (future Louis XII) – waged a war against the crown. When at

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[1] Robert Koehler, Beyond the Nation State in The Huffington Post, 2011

Palace of Fontainebleau Photo by David Iliff. Licence: CC-BY-SA 3.0

home, the nobility were now required to be at court for much of the year. Francis chose his first five governors from his friends and family, ensuring powerful roles went exclusively to loyal nobles. Noble status depended increasingly on royal favour, as the new noblesse de la robe played a larger role. The success of the crown's consolidation can be seen, paradoxically, in Bourbon's rebellion of 1523. The Duc de Bourbon, France's leading noble, revolted over land requisitioning, but his revolt failed; nobody joined him and he was easily chased into exile.

By 1547 Henry II felt secure enough to expand the role of royal appointments at the expense of the nobility. He appointed four secretaries of state, and increased their remits, salaries and roles. The old idea that the wealthiest magnates had a 'right' by birth to shape policy was dying.

War can thus be seen as not only playing a significant role in the expansion and centralisation of the state, but also in the creation of a sense of identity and domestic peace. These fed off each other, domestic peace allowing a further expansion of the state which in turn developed the sense of a shared nation.

Yet war alone cannot explain the rise of the state. War had dominated the previous two centuries but the state had remained small. Rather we should see a broader royal effort to bolster the crown's position, notably in relation to the law. Between the late 1400s and 1559 the government expressed its legal dominance, eroding regional variation, entrenched rights, and noble privilege. Louis XII transformed the Grand Conseil (an offshoot of the royal council) into the highest appeal court in the land, replacing the more independent mined Paris parlement with a royal puppet. The law was to be upheld by the crown. Indeed in 1527 the chancellor Duprat forcefully reminded the parlement that they were there to implement the king's will, not to question it. The codification of the law of Northern France (initiated under Louis XII) marked the beginning of an effort to make France's law uniform and ultimately national, and

to limit noble influence over cases. Regional parlements were introduced which registered royal decrees at a local level (lending them increased legitimacy) in Languedoc, Provence, Normandy and Britanny. The development of a centralised legal structure was continued by Francis I, transferring heresy cases from the ecclesiastical courts to the secular system in 1539, and Henry II, who introduced sixty presidial courts up and down France.

Their successes were mixed. Louis' efforts at codification were only completed under Napoleon. Parlements became focal points of regional opposition, as the Rouen parlement did in 1539 when it refused to register the Edict of Villers-Cotterêts in its entirety in the face of royal demands. However royal will prevailed. Francis closed down and re-opened the Rouen parlement in 1540 in a show of force. The presidial courts' role was restricted to small claims, and they were created largely to raise funds through the sale of places on them. However their introduction reveals nonetheless the vast authority of the crown to intervene in all things legal, despite the protestations of regional parlements. The crown was able to manipulate legal institutions largely to its will.

We can overstate the state's progress. There were significant limits, the old nobility continued to fulfil a unique position in times of war, and many of them profited from rising land prices across the century. Many of the thousands of new royal officials bought their offices which came with tax exemptions, a process Francis I legalised in 1522. In the long run this deprived the crown of revenue and created a bureaucracy riven by absenteeism and a lack of engagement. The failure of both Francis I and Henry II to introduce a salt tax in western France was significant and is testament to enduring regional autonomy. Indeed from 1554 a trade barrier ran down France, a barrier that lasted until the Revolution. Legal reforms were particularly stilted, it was not until Napoleon's codification that France achieved a truly national set of laws.

However, taken as a whole, the picture by 1559 was

one of much increased royal authority, a falling off in the independent action of the nobility, and a vastly expanded tax system (though managed by a flawed bureaucratic class). The state had come a long way. What about the nation?

Religion had done much to unite the French people throughout its medieval history; they were said to be linked by 'un roi, une loi, une foi', one king, one law, one faith. The legal unity was weak at best, as efforts to codify it in the north demonstrate. Religion was then a crucial element of the unity of the French people; they were all Catholics, their king was supported by God, and they all celebrated the same feast days up and down the land. The religious overtones in French coronations, with holy oil and an oath taken swearing to defend the church and faith, hint at the significance of religion. The religious ceremony was emphasised, as if legitimising the king, the oil being god's blessing.

Yet, with the rise of Calvinism in the 1540s and 1550s, the religious concord which underpinned French unity was shattered. By 1559 10% of the population and, crucially, 30% of the nobility belonged to the reformed religion. As the state was advancing, the nation's religious cohesion was crumbling. The outbreak of the Wars of Religion shattered the illusion of national unity. In 1572, up to twenty thousand Protestants were slaughtered by popular Catholic mobs across France in the St Bartholomew's Day massacres, often with ritualistic violence such as the baptising of Protestant children in their parents' blood. The United Provinces of the Midi were set up under a Catholic governor, 30% of France refusing homage to the crown. Religion had stopped drawing Frenchmen together, and driven them apart. Resistance theories spread on both the Catholic and Protestant side legitimising opposition to a tyrant; the French were no longer united by a king or a faith.

And yet the Wars of Religion came to a relatively abrupt halt after 30 years, in 1598, with the Edict of Nantes. This allowed a degree of toleration but failed to restore unity. This is all testament to the declining importance of religion in the French national fabric. The crown itself had given up on religious unity (at least in the short-medium term). The Wars of Religion can thus been a crucial step on the road to the modern nation-state,

for they forced the French to move beyond the medieval idea of shared religion as the foundation of national unity.

So what replaced religion at the heart of the national identity? A new sense of a national French culture was a large part of it, made up of language, art, architecture and literature. The French language grew in size and stature across the 16th century. This was the century of Rabelais and Montaigne, and the French were becoming proud of their language; a poet (Joachim du Bellay) writing a 'Defense and Illustration of the French Language' in 1549. In claiming it as a worthy language for literary expression it was being put on a par with Latin. From 1539 and the Edict of Villers-Coterets French was the language of the courts and government, replacing Latin. This is emotionally significant, for the upper echelons of society were now talking the same language as the common Frenchman (though dialects persisted). The French identity was becoming more important than the elevated Latin style. Patriotism was overcoming tradition. The national language replaced the international.

Art also became a source of national pride. The French Renaissance blossomed in the years 1515-1559, and again in the early 17th century, Leonardo da Vinci and his Mona Lisa came to France, as did many of the best artists from across Europe. Some were French themselves, such as Dubreuil, but all of them were in France creating some of the finest art the world has ever seen, and it was adorning French walls.

Architecture blossomed too. Fontainebleau was rebuilt, and the Chateaux of the Loire valley sprung up, notably Chambord and Chenonceau. This style was copied by other nobles, emulating royal style. Chateau d'Azay-le-Rideau is a notable example of the same style, built by the head of the royal treasury. It also presented a new way to impress royal majesty on foreign dignitaries and on French subjects, English emissaries to the French court were apparently shocked by the richness of the art on display in the lavish and rebuilt Fontainebleau. French culture, and the majesty of the French crown, thus came to play an ever larger role in French unity.

A resurgent French identity can be noted in the last years of the Wars of Religion. As the hardline Catholics came to rely increasingly on Spanish support, Phillip sending 50 000 ecus a month and an army in 1592, they

The nation was replacing religion at the heart of people's identities

lost popular support. Troops drifted away from Mayenne (head of the Catholic League) and in 1594 Catholic Parisians forced out the radical Catholic Sixteen in Paris, welcoming Henry IV. The nation was replacing religion at the heart of people's identities. To capitalise on this swing and cement the feeling of a shared French identity Henry IV attacked the Spanish in 1595. That he did so while Marseilles and Brittany had still refused to submit to his authority shows he saw a war against a common enemy as the best way of rallying a still divided country. He defeated the Spanish at Fontaine Francaise. After his victory many of the recalcitrant nobles who had resisted his rule came round, partly out of a feeling of inevitability no doubt but also out of a realisation that if it came down to it they were on the French side not the Spanish. War remained a useful, if not unique, tool to build the nation at home.

Henry's nation building had physical manifestations too. He aimed to promote agriculture, drain swamps and build infrastructure that would bolster the economy and bring Frenchmen closer together. It was Henry who erected the Pont-Neuf, building bridges after years of division. He also built more roads and canals than any French monarch before him. He directly appointed mayors of towns, extending royal control of the provinces. Though elements of many of his policies existed already, the whole constitutes a recognisably more modern approach than that which had come before. This reconstruction was directed by a lesser noble, the

Protestant Maximilien de Bethune. He was promoted to chief minister within four years of being a tax commissioner on account of his efficiency and vision. He rose to sit alongside Princes of the Blood as their equals, and lead the government of France. Government was becoming a profession not a noble perquisite.

The religious, political and cultural transformations of the 16th century created a new type of country. Medieval ideas of vertical allegiance were replaced by horizontal lines of kinship between French men and women. A shared king and faith had not united a people. The lines of allegiance to a monarch run vertically, from Frenchman to king. They do not link one Frenchman to another in any meaningful sense. The same is true of a faith; the French shared a faith, but faith is ultimately about the relationship between the man, the church and God – again predominantly linear. Moreover all of Europe was Catholic at the end of the 15th century, so the common faith would not necessarily lead to emotional attachment to a French identity. Regional identities remained strong, while feelings of kinship between 'Frenchmen' were weak. Yet by the late 1590s a sense of national identity had emerged . At the end of the Wars of Religion the strongly Catholic Parisian population turfed out their rebellious Catholic leaders to welcome in a French King who had led the Protestant cause. Their fear of Spanish interference trumped their fear of Protestantism. The national interest replaced religious interest as their prime concern. This is indicative of a

newly modern society that favoured canals over religious processions, a bureaucracy over an old nobility and France over Catholicism.

So what drove this French movement towards modernity, this development of the state and creation of a nation? It was partly war. War is expensive, fuelling the expansion of the state across the country and increasing its size, scope and efficiency. The expansion of the state reinforced feelings of kinship; across France the same courts would sit, the same decrees would be enforced and the same taxes levied. War also appeased the nobility, who still envisaged their role as at the head of an army, allowing the erosion of their role in government and the centralisation of power around the king and those whom he selected. It also furthered a sense of national identity, the 'us' vs. 'them' mentality. Furthermore, the sheer horror of the Wars of Religion encouraged the relegation of religion's importance; both sides were prepared to make compromises they wouldn't otherwise have for the sake of peace. Yet it was by no means exclusively war that drove the development of the nation state. The emergence of a proud and national art, government, architecture and, above all, language would tie Frenchmen one to another, creating a nation. Royal centralisation, war, culture, and language, succeeded not only in creating a new, more powerful state, but also a people and a national identity.

France is by no means unique. Many nation states have been formed in times of war; Germany was created out of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, the United States out of its war against the British. And if nation states are so often formed in opposition to an 'other', can they survive peaceful cooperation? Or if we get to know our neighbour too well and they cease to be the 'other', will the nation state crumble? Or is the idea of nationhood so deeply

> *If nation states are so often formed in opposition to an 'other', can they survive peaceful cooperation?*

engrained it will sink efforts at international integration? Can a collection of nation states be grouped together in one international club with its own rules that are enforced at a supranational level? These are the questions that will shape our future, and being answered right now. The Brexit vote suggests the idea of the nation state, and the sense of the (European) other, remains strong. So too does Trump's election. He has actively rejected international co-operation, vowing instead to 'Put America First' – his sense of the nation-state damaging international cooperation such as the Paris Climate Accord and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

16th century France's example – a nation-state built around distinctly national institutions and a national identity against the backdrop of foreign war – appears to bode badly for internationalists. It suggests the nation states are incompatible with integration into supranational organisations. Yet it is also tells a far more positive tale. Identity, which we think of as deeply engrained, is in reality very flexible. The erosion of regional identity, supplemented by 'Frenchness' suggests people can quickly adopt new identities. If a Gascon identity can be overtaken by a national French identity, then surely a European identity can quickly come to exist alongside (or even replace) national allegiance. This is already being seen across Europe; in every EU country bar Britain, Cyprus and Greece the majority identify themselves by both their national and their European identity, and some by their European identity alone.[2] 16th century France saw the emergence of a nation state which involved the incorporation of regional power and identity into the national, the 21st century is seeing the incorporation of the national into the international. The nation state is thus not only a threat and also an example to international bodies.

2 European Commission, Spring 2015 Eurobarometer.

Pont-Neuf By Rog Licence: CC BY-SA 2.0

Le massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy by François Dubois (1529 – 1584)

The Sicilian Mafia During the Fascist Era: a Study of Antimafia in an Authoritarian Context

Philip Freeman explores the interrelationship between the Italian state and the mafia over time. In particular, he analyses why politicians failed to extirpate organised crime from Sicily

Apologists of Italian fascism use the Mussolini regime's apparent successes in the years before the Second World War to attempt to portray the fascist era in a more positive light. Often examples such as the draining of the Pontine Marshes or the institution of pensions are pointed out as policy areas where the fascist regime achieved more than it republican successor. However Mussolini's "destruction" of the Sicilian mafia or Cosa Nostra is the apologist's example par excellence. The theory posited is that the regime, without the shackles of the rule of law, constitutional rights and due process, was able to effectively destroy Cosa Nostra in just five years between 1924 and 1929. Not only is this almost a totally erroneous theory, but the study of fascism's attempts to root out the mafia in Sicily also gives us insights into best practice for fighting organised crime in general.

Mussolini's campaign against the mafia started in 1924, when he appointed the magistrate Cesare Mori as Prefect of Trapani, later in 1925 moving Mori to the prefecture of Palermo. Mori had been the Prefect of Bologna during fascism's rise to power, and had developed a reputation for having an almost obsessive desire to uphold state power, coming down equally as hard on socialist as on fascist political violence. He was therefore not regarded well by the new regime, but Mussolini saw in him the perfect weapon to reassert central state power in Sicily. "Your excellency" Mussolini wrote to Mori "has carte blanche, the authority of the state absolutely, I repeat, absolutely, must be restored in Sicily. If the laws currently in force hinder you, it will not be a problem, we will pass new laws". Mori, now a "super-prefect", with almost unlimited powers across the whole island (ordinary prefects in Italy have authority only over the territory of a single province), created an army of 800 Carabinieri, well armed and equipped with horses, loyal only to him. Mori launches a brutal campaign of repression in the Sicilian countryside, where Cosa Nostra had almost entirely usurped state sovereignty. 'Freed' from the need to observe due process, Mori used methods such as torture, hostage-taking and collective guilt. The courts, under his control, send thousands to prison or to internal exile, often with dubious proof. Even he himself admitted that his trials condemn many innocent people. His most brutal action occurred in early 1926. Knowing that several members of Cosa Nostra are hiding in the town of Gangi in the province of Palermo, he surrounded the town with his men, besieging it for four days. He then sent his men in, arresting relatives of mafiosi, destroying their property and killing their livestock. Humiliated and fearing for the safety of their relatives (including women and children), several wanted men were forced to give themselves up. The "Iron Prefect", as Mori became known, summed up his methods succinctly: "If the mafia terrifies, the state must terrify more".

Mori's campaign of terror did reduce brigandage and criminality on the island. The regime proudly proclaimed that "No government since the Unification of Italy has ever accomplished what Mussolini has brought about in a few months". Mori gained national and international fame. However in 1929 he was recalled to Rome and made a Senator. Despite Mussolini's glowing words of admiration and praise, it was clear he no longer wanted Mori in Sicily.

We cannot be completely sure why Mori was recalled, but it is possible to infer Mussolini's reasons. These reasons for the sacking of the Iron Prefect also reveal a fundamental weakness in fascism's ability to fight the mafia. First of all, it is very likely that Mussolini felt in some way threatened by Mori in terms of popularity. Mori had become extremely popular in Sicily and Italy for his work in "destroying the mafia" and according to some accounts he had let this popularity go to his head. He had ordered his portrait to be hung next to those of Mussolini and the King in every Sicilian school. This was deeply problematic for Mussolini, as the fascist system could only allow Il Duce to be the most popular man in Italy, the only man capable of solving previously insoluble problems. Secondly, Mori's brutal methods may have worried even Mussolini, who recalled the Iron Prefect because he wanted some sort of normality to return to the island. Mussolini believed that Mori's work was done, that Cosa Nostra had more or less been defeated and that state and more importantly, fascist power had been imposed on the island. Furthermore, if the mafia had been defeated, as the regime had claimed, why was Mori still in Sicily, using tactics reminiscent of an occupying army? The historian Giuseppe Tricoli wrote that Mussolini "believed, maybe mistakenly, that Mori's work was complete, and wanted to avoid further militarisation of the island that could have been seen by the population as a perpetual state of war". Therefore Mori had to go. Finally, although Mori had only dealt with the "small fish" of the mafia (mostly in the countryside), as historian Arrigo Petacco claims, he had started to worry the fascist hierarchy by going after the urban mafia: the businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats and even churchmen who really gave the orders in Cosa Nostra. His biggest catch was the head of the Fascist Party in Sicily and member of the Grand Council of Fascism, Alfredo Cucco, who was accused of being involved in the mafia. The accusation against Cucco worried many fascist leaders and local potentates in Sicily. Mori, who already had enemies within the fascist hierarchy because of his actions as Prefect of Bologna, became a very dangerous person for a certain element of the regime that had in a way vassaled Cosa Nostra and integrated it within the

> Mussolini's regime felt that its monopoly of power and of violence, essential for a totalitarian state, was being threatened in Sicily by Cosa Nostra

A mural of 200 m² portraying the two murdered Antimafia magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. Inaugurated Palermo summer 2017.

fascist system of power on the island.

Mussolini's recall of Mori for the reasons explored invites the obvious question: why did the fascist state want to destroy, or at least be seen to destroy, the mafia? Unlike the Republic that followed it, the fascist regime was not interested in maintaining rule of law or protecting its citizens' constitutional rights, both of which the mafia, and organised crime in general, fundamentally threatens. In fact fascism was and is completely opposed to these two principles that make up a large part of the foundation of modern, democratic society. Instead Mussolini's regime felt that its monopoly of power and of violence, essential for a totalitarian state, was being threatened in Sicily by Cosa Nostra. Furthermore, the regime lived off propagandistic stunts, from the Battle for Grain to the costly, counter-productive pegging of the Lira to the Dollar. The campaign against the mafia was simply another attempt by the regime to show that it could do everything the previous liberal regime couldn't. Therefore we can see the rule of Cesare Mori as a way of forcing local potentates within Sicily (i.e. Cosa Nostra) to recognise the fascist state's superior power and a propaganda campaign for the population on the mainland.

In many ways it is not at all surprising that fascism and the mafia were able to come to some sort of tacit agreement whereby Cosa Nostra (or at least its urban, upper class top hierarchy) would be integrated into the fascist system of power on the island. Fascism and Cosa Nostra share many defining features: a hierarchical command structure, centralised, absolute decision making, a disregard for human lives, rights and welfare, an obsession with absolute loyalty, honour and tradition and an adherence to the law of the jungle. These similarities allow the mafia to be brought into the fascist state, impossible in a (well-functioning) democracy. The Iron Prefect was therefore not a tool of destruction sent to absolutely annihilate the mafia, but rather a tool of subordination; showing to the potentates of the mafia just how powerful the fascist state was and therefore how bad an idea it would have been to try and go against it.

As the magistrate Giovanni Falcone pointed out, the mafia is strong when people's faith in the state's institutions is weak. This insight points out the flaws in Mori's campaign. Even if Mori had not been recalled, it is unlikely he would have ever destroyed the mafia. His methods were that of an occupying army, and his repressive actions were not, as noted by the historian Christopher Duggan, accompanied by any social programmes for the local population or strengthening of state institutions. Furthermore, Mori erroneously believed that Cosa Nostra was not a unitary organisation, but rather more a "way of life". These two facts allowed the mafia to "submerge" (as it was later to do in the 1990s again under attack from the state) and return to prominence after the allied landings in 1943.

Therefore, the fascist attempt to root out the mafia from Sicily was doomed to fail from the start. Not just because the fascist state was unable to come up with any other solution other than brute force, but because its hierarchical structures proved too recipient to integrating the mafia. Moreover, lacking any sort of impulse from civil society (not allowed to exist after the fascist consolidation of power) which proved vital from the 1980s onwards in dealing blows to the mafia, the regime was more than happy to allow Cosa Nostra into the fascist vertical of power, providing they accept the ultimate power of Il Duce.

What would be the principle lessons to draw from this investigation? First of all, it is not at all a bad result if someone who everyone suspects of being part of Cosa Nostra is acquitted by an (independent) court. The adherence to due process and the protection of everyone's constitutional rights does not weaken the democratic state, but rather strengthens it; building its legitimacy by squarely contrasting it with the bloodthirsty and arbitrary methods of the mafia. Second of all, it is not enough simply to concentrate on low-level common criminality to destroy the mafia. The so-called "bourgeois mafia" that corrupts administration, business (especially finance) and politics needs to be addressed as well. Maybe Mori would have gone after this element of Cosa Nostra if he had not been stopped in his tracks, but that would lead us to the unsavoury field of alternative history. Finally, and most importantly, Mori's campaign, despite all its flaws, showed that if the state threw the resources available to it in a dedicated "war" against the mafia, it could deal organised crime a serious blow. This lesson was learnt in the second half of the 20th century, when the Italian state steadily improved its antimafia structures, dealing a huge blow to Cosa Nostra with the Maxi Trial of 1986-1992, where 360 members of the mafia were convicted, either being jailed for a great deal of time or being forced into hiding, including top bosses Salvatore Riina and Bernardo Provenzano. This was all done according to law and respecting the defendants civil and constitutional rights. Mori, despite all the resources available to him, despite there being no need for him to follow any sort of law enforcement or judicial process, never achieved anything remotely like this decapitation of Cosa Nostra. So therefore not only were his means brutal and inhumane, but they were also not all effective. If people fear the state more than the mafia, then why should people choose the state over the mafia?

The town of Gangi, near Palermo, with Etna in the background

Chief of Chiefs: The Father of a Nation

Sophie Kazan Makhlouf celebrates the centenary of the birth of Sheikh Zayed, founder of the United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates has become known in recent years for Dubai's tallest towers, largest shopping malls and Abu Dhabi's Formula One races and luxurious hotels, but it was not always so. Visitors to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for whatever glamorous or high octane spectacle, will not fail to notice on the walls of public buildings, along motorways or billboards, the looming face of the late HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE's first president, hailed by *The Times* as the 'chief of chiefs' and known to Emiratis simply as 'Baba Zayed' (father Zayed). 2018 will mark one hundred years since Sheikh Zayed's birth and it is being declared The Year of Zayed in the United Arab Emirates with social media accounts being designed, landmark buildings and designer jewellery being created, to mark the occasion.

So little is known of Sheikh Zayed in the United Kingdom and it is difficult to imagine how a single man could have played such a pivotal role in the creation of the country, during the 1970s. This short paper will examine the significance of HH Sheikh Zayed's legacy and pinpoint some of the defining influences that he had on present and future development in the Gulf region (Al Khaleej) and particularly on the UAE.

HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan was born in 1918 in Al Ain, in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, one of the desert emirates that borders the Arabian Gulf. From the mid 19th century, Great Britain had assumed 'protection' over the region, owing to its position on important trade routes between Britain and British India. Abu Dhabi was one of nine self-governing emirates or regions that were included in this British Protectorate, bound by several treaties and accords that were signed between the ruling tribal chiefs and British Government between 1820 and 1971. In despatches and reports, the area became known as The Trucial States. To avoid colonialist undertones, this paper will refer to the region as 'the emirates', prior to the creation of the United Arab Emirates in 1971.

The arid landscape that Sheikh Zayed grew up in was shaped by local Bedouin customs and Islamic teachings. Though he was a tribal lord or Sheikh by descent, from the ruling Al Nahyan family of the region, Sheikh Zayed was brought up simply and made a habit of interacting with his people. Hawley describes the harshness and poverty of the Emirati landscape before the discovery of oil: 'The character of the people has… been moulded by the influence of [the] desert'. The two main industries of the region, agriculture and pearl diving were arduous; pearl diving, without modern breathing equipment, was a dangerous profession to which men were driven in an attempt to support their starving families. From 1928-1966, HH Sheikh Shakhbut Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Sheikh Zayed's older brother, ruled Abu Dhabi, with Sheikh Zayed taking on the rule of the emirate's Eastern region in 1946. Sheikh Zayed travelled throughout the country, gaining a deep understanding of the local people, the land, customs and concerns (Washington, n.d.).

According to some sources, he spent time amongst the Bedouin tribesmen, learning about the desert surroundings and from his time with the Bedouin, he

HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

> We have to diversify the sources of our revenue and construct economic projects that will ensure a free, stable and dignified life for the people

With Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip in Abu Dhabi in 1979

developed a love of falconry (Washington, n.d.). Inspiring future leaders was also an important priority for Sheikh Zayed and as ruler of the Eastern region, he set about establishing the emirate's first zoo in Al Ain, which opened in 1968, and its first Art Museum, which opened later, in 1969 (Hawley, 1970).

From 1955 onwards, the United Kingdom's political representation in the Trucial states took the form of representatives in each of the emirates, a Political Officer, with a Political Agent based in Abu Dhabi. Administration and communication in the region was an arduous task, particularly when conflicts arose between the various tribes. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the British made several attempts unite the rulers of the Trucial states (Taryam, 1987). One such attempt resulted in the formation of the Trucial States Council, 'without any written constitution... [it] became responsible for the ever growing development programme, initially financed by the British government' (Hawley, 1970). We know from Donald Hawley, himself a British Political Agent to the Trucial States from 1958-1962 that Britain hoped to develop the region's basic infrastructure, its water supply, healthcare, education and roads.

The Trucial States Development Fund was set up to bring about further developments, modernisation, hygiene and formal education. A water supply was established and the fund encouraged already oil-rich Arab countries such as Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain to contribute funds and resources.[1] The Trucial States Development Fund set about creating five-year

development plans, the first of which began in 1955, with the aim of updating administrative buildings, setting up a network of schools and creating a police force (Hawley, 1970). Kuwait was particularly active in establishing schools, curricula and materials. Other countries sent money, teachers or built schools. Hawley writes that the first five-year plan was successful and between 1956 and 1961, £411,000 was invested into the fund. The 1960s marked a period of economic decline in Britain: a further five-year plan, was not fully approved (Hawley, 1970).

The discovery of oil in the region (Bahrain in 1932, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in 1938 and off the coast of Abu Dhabi and Dubai from 1958) signalled a change in fortune for the whole region. Sheikh Zayed saw the huge potential for the area's development and advancement. He had seen the poverty of the Bedouin herders and pearl fishermen and realised that the inadequate state of the country's education, healthcare and infrastructure was not sufficient to ensure his country's future success. When oil was discovered, Sheikh Shakhbut, as ruler of Abu Dhabi, was expected to jump into action, developing the emirate and pushing for social development. However, family conflicts amongst the ruling families, perhaps exacerbated by the British administrative presence, led to a bloodless coup in 1966. Shakhbut was deposed in favour of his brother, the visionary and energetic Sheikh Zayed (*The Times*, 1989).

There began a period of political manoeuvring. Since the end of the Second World War, Great Britain had been undergoing a period of economic decline and it began to

[1] This illustrates not only the extreme poverty and desolation of the emirates until the mid 20th century, but also the solidarity that existed amongst the Gulf's desert kingdoms.

slowly distance itself from its colonial and industrial past. Harold Wilson, then Prime Minister, took the paradoxical decision to withdraw British military bases and political influence from the Trucial States, in January 1968. An urgent and tense period of discussion followed, as nearby Iraq and Iran attempted to exert influence and control over the region, much to the horror of neighbouring Saudi Arabia and the United States. Keen to maintain the stability and peace that had reigned over the region during the British administration, HH Sheikh Zayed and the ruler of Dubai, HH Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum urged the British government to keep their military presence in the Gulf, offering to reimburse any shortfall of funding (Taryam, 1987).[2] The British government refused.

The Birth of a Nation

Sheikh Zayed, as leader of the largest emirates of Abu Dhabi, formed an alliance with Sheikh Al Maktoum of Dubai and held emergency discussions with the other emirates of Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Bahrain and Qatar. On 2 December 1971, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Quwain and Fujairah signed a treaty of union Al Etihad, establishing themselves as a federation under one flag. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was born. Ras Al Khaimah joined the federation the following year. Bahrain and Qatar decided to declare their independence as autonomous countries. In recognition of his efforts and vision, members of the new UAE governing council elected Sheikh Zayed as the president and he was subsequently re-elected to the post every five years, until

[2] On 3 March 1968, Sheikh Zayed gave interview with the Times to say, "The people of the Gulf are not capable of protection themselves internally and externally."On 14 July 1970, Sheikh Rashid openly told the Times of Gulf States' support of the British Presence. (Taryam 1987).

HH Sheikh Zayed with Indira Gandhi in 1975

his death in 2004.

One of Sheikh Zayed's first actions as the nation's president was to establish National Day or Flag Day on 2 December, to mark the creation of the nation. He wanted the day to be remembered as the birth of the nation, rather than the final withdrawal of British power. Similarly, he quickly formalised the country's traditional dress, as a way of promoting unity and national pride; a white kandora robe and gutra headscarf for men and a dark abaya robe for women with a loose scarf or shallah. Though largely self educated, Sheikh Zayed maintained that his ways were the simple and traditional ways of the desert and was proudly determined to uphold these beliefs.

" There is no glory without the glory of the country and its citizens. We have to be proud of our forefathers, who were able to face the harshness of life with a strong will and dedication to shape a better collective future. "
HH Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan (Gulf news, 2005.)

Unashamed of his administration's lack of experience and the UAE's seemingly abrupt arrival onto the international stage, Sheikh Zayed showed an acute political sense and was consistent in his vision for the country. He encouraged a respect for learning, for benevolence, social justice and responsibility. He was a natural leader and diplomat and foreign leaders were impressed by his intelligence and composure. The BBC correspondent, Robert Graves, who accompanied HM Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh during their visit to the UAE in 1979 reported their delight and surprise at discovering what the country and its people had to offer (Langton, 2010).[3]

Sheikh Zayed's calm influence gained international acclaim, thus he was called upon to act as mediator in pan-Arab discussions (*The Times,* 1989). Recognising that his country was now in a position to give foreign aid, he encouraged government entities throughout the Emirates to give financial, humanitarian and charitable assistance to worldwide development projects, including assignments in Egypt, Afghanistan and Palestine. He also saw the importance of imbuing citizens of the new UAE nation, with a sense of national and Islamic heritage and benevolent tradition, which counteracted the nation's perceived youth. He backed the idea of free education for Emirati citizens and particularly equal opportunities for women, sparking the UAE's governmental drive to support Emirati women's development and leadership. This has resulted in the development of an impressive number of qualified female managers in business and engineering, for example.

While the UAE had been blessed with immense oil fortunes, Sheikh Zayed's believed that it was only fair that revenues from oil sales should be spent on Emirati citizens whose ancestors had worked on the land for generations. As well as distributing property rights and houses to Emirati citizens without land or in need, he anticipated the future demise of the country's oil wealth and wanted the country to be prepared:

" We must not rely on oil alone as the main source of our national income. We have to diversify the sources of our revenue and construct economic projects that will ensure a free, stable and dignified life for the people. "
HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan
Sheikh Zayed's Legacy

" It is my duty as the leader of the young people of this country to encourage them to work and to exert themselves in order to raise their own standards and to be of service to the country. The individual who is healthy and of a sound mind and body but who does not work commits a crime against himself and society. "
HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

Throughout the last three decades of the 20th century, a huge number of workers were employed to develop the country, build roads, buildings, set up telephone cables and transform the country into a nation with a modern infrastructure. Like doting parents, Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Maktoum and other member of the country's governing body, were determined to offer the UAE as much as they could in the way of development and innovation in order to inspire the country's own development. Could Sheikh Zayed have foreseen that his country would become a symbol, not only of exuberance but also one of culture, of innovation and development that it has become today?

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[3] 'The Queen already knew the rulers in the emirates through horse racing because she, of course, is a very keen racegoer and breeder… She [and the Duke of Edinburgh] thought the whole thing was really quite fascinating' (Langton, 2010).

Shakespeare in the Alley: Reader Response in Pop Music

Ben Philipps adopts a post-Barthian approach to Bob Dylan

In the 1960s, a group of literary theorists had the novel idea of ignoring the aims of the author. When analysing a text, they focussed instead on the experience of its reader. This is often known as 'reader-response' criticism; Roland Barthes, one of the leading lights of this form of criticism, described it more graphically as the 'Death of the Author'. It was a difficult, revolutionary idea at the time, and one that polarises opinion to this day. One test of this theory might then be to apply it to forms of art other than the written word; forms which offer different challenges in their interpretation. At the same time as the literary establishment was being challenged, so too was the traditional cultural hierarchy of 'high' and 'low'; for the first time, pop music was being treated as a legitimate form of art. Standing atop this boundary between art and entertainment was Bob Dylan – a singer and musician who also happens, as of 2016, to be a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Having moved away from overtly political songwriting in 1964, with his album *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, the former folk hero adopted a surreal, brazenly modern approach to the human experience, exemplified in the 1966 double LP *Blonde on Blonde*. The lyrical style therein feels like a piece of Cubist art: vivid, hallucinatory images appear in each song, approaching whatever broad theme is conveyed from multiple, often mutually exclusive, angles.

The guilty undertaker sighs
The lonesome organ grinder cries
The silver saxophones say I should refuse you
The cracked bells and washed-out horns
Blow into my face with scorn
But it's not that way
I wasn't born to lose you.

These lines, taken from 'I Want You', are perfect examples of a first conflict which arises out of treating the author as dead in music. Dylan's husky, uncharacteristically soulful vocal (the song was the last to be recorded in a marathon studio session, finishing at 4 a.m.) suggests what becomes apparent in the lyrics themselves: this is a song about distinctly individual feeling. In under three minutes of singing, there are 36 uses of a first-person pronoun; enhanced by the relentless six-note keyboard riff, there is an urgency to the sentiments expressed that emphasises their origin. This is a song of desperation, not love; in fact, the song never mentions love, or any other emotion, and could very plausibly be about something far more sinister. We just don't know. The Beatles' 'Got to Get You into My Life' was (in)famously written about cannabis – however,

it functions just as well as an 'innocent' declaration of romantic intent. In 1966, the year of *Blonde on Blonde*, Dylan embarked upon his so-called 'Amphetamine Tour', and according to biographer Daniel Mark Epstein, was chemically dependent for much of the period: it's not a great interpretative leap to suggest that 'I Want You' is about drugs. The important point is that it doesn't really matter. What does is the song itself; how its musical and poetic elements work together to create three minutes of tumbling, frantic passion. We can easily ignore the 'You' of the title, whether it refers to a human or a chemical substance – Barthes and his colleagues would want us to ignore the 'I'.

'Visions of Johanna', the third track on the LP, appears to some as "an extended, impressionistic account of a woozy New York City night"; others view it as a "masterpiece of obsession", its main focus the narrator's desperate longing for a mysterious, unseen woman. Alternatively, the seven-minute song might be an extended put-down, directed at those who take themselves too seriously. True to form, perhaps Dylan is reinforcing his reputation as the master of the lyrical philippic:

*Now, little boy lost, he takes himself so seriously
…He's sure got a lot of gall
To be so useless and all
Muttering small talk at the wall while I'm in the hall*

The song was written in 1965; the same year Dylan married Sara Lownds, whom he described, unusually given his reticent, aloof public persona, as "the woman I love". Does this cast doubt on the 'obsession' theory of interpreting the song? There is a dynamic in the song that is decidedly non-monogamous:

*Just Louise and her lover so entwined
And these visions of Johanna that conquer my mind*

It's clear that Dylan, who derives pleasure from irritating, confusing and alienating his fanbase, is going to be hard to pin down.

Blonde on Blonde is not a concept album, at least not in terms of story; unlike *Sgt. Pepper* or *Quadrophenia*, there isn't a clear conceit that underpins all the songs on the LP. In a literary sense, this means that we have no singular 'narrator', what German calls the 'lyrisches Ich'. We have absolutely no evidence to suggest that it is the same person singing the bawdy 'Rainy Day Women #12 & 35' and the balladic 'Just Like A Woman', other than the fact that we know, and can hear, it to be Dylan – but taking a deconstructionist approach, in which the author is a no more than a vessel through which social context is manipulated into art, this means very little. In effect, if the author is dead, the name 'Bob Dylan' on the record sleeve is meaningless.

While this approach frees us from trying to understand the myriad contradictions of the album, it also casts us somewhat adrift. Without the gimmick of a fictional music-hall concert, or the story of a young mod named Jimmy, it becomes difficult to treat the album both as a collection of songs from different viewpoints, expressing totally different things, and simultaneously as a great artwork which exemplifies creative harmony.

What ties the songs together, perhaps, is the music. The "thin, wild-mercury sound", combining Nashville, New York and unforgiving Minnesota ice, is a constant thread in the album; the frantic snare drum at the start of each 'Johanna' verse is the same one heard in the acerbic 'Most Likely You Go Your Way (And I'll Go Mine)'. A new problem then arises in our attempt to pin down any tangible creative force: that precise drum sound comes from Kenny Buttrey, a Nashville session musician. In a similar vein, every track on the LP features Al Kooper on keyboard – if the instrumentation is *Blonde on Blonde's* unifying thread, to what extent is the album's artistic unity truly Dylan's doing?

*Well, Shakespeare, he's in the alley
With his pointed shoes and his bells
Speaking to some French girl who says she knows me well.*

In the last half-century, many arguments have been levelled against deconstructionist theory. If literature is indeed as Barthes describes, a space "where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes", it becomes increasingly difficult to ascribe skill to an author – to place them in the pantheon of the genius, or to lambast them as a potboiler-writing hack. Much of what we call 'criticism' is predicated upon the work of art existing as the product of somebody's imagination and skill. A hardline anti-reader response theorist might argue that, without the presence of the artist in some form, we cannot distinguish between good and bad art.

Receiving accolades from sources ranging from *Rolling Stone* magazine to Sir Christopher Ricks, Bob Dylan has long been recognised as a hugely influential and gifted songwriter. An instinct tells us that something must separate the great writers and artists from other people – it can't all be down to the lottery of circumstance and the mindset with which the audience approaches the work. Great art, however, does not ask us to agree or disagree, but to recognise and empathise. However drug-addled, cynical and grounded in the American tradition Dylan's song writing is, it remains relevant to a huge number of people.

Following from this, a case could be made for reconciliation: a "reader's" perception of art is important, but whether this perception leads to appreciation and empathy of some truth or experience is down to the author's presentation. One might argue that, in the case of something as emotionally charged as music, the dichotomy between reader-response and the cult of the artist is a false one, in that it fails to satisfy the condition of mutual exclusivity. Dylan's genius allows our response to be so powerful and visceral. We identify with Hamlet's indecision so strongly because of, not in spite of, the words that Shakespeare wrote.

*Inside the museums, infinity goes up on trial
Voices echo, 'This is what salvation must be like after a while'
But Mona Lisa must have had the highway blues
You can tell by the way she smiles.*

> Dylan, who derives pleasure from irritating, confusing and alienating his fanbase, is going to be hard to pin down

Photo: Sharon Mollerus. Bob Dylan Mural, Minneapolis (Flickr)

Spirit of the Sixties

Eve Chadbourne explores notions of freedom, rebellion and anti-authoritarianism

'Turn on, Tune in and Drop out' urged American psychologist Timothy Leary in the 1960s as he advocated the use of psychedelic drugs to 'free your mind'. This contributed to a burgeoning drug culture which aimed to inspire a whole new way of thinking. A growth in anti-establishment attitudes led to increasingly visible protest, particularly against government, sparking a 'revolution' across the western world which produced new outlooks, new music and a change in societal values. With this year marking the 50th anniversary of the 1968 mass demonstrations in France, Germany and the USA, it seems a perfect time to reflect: just how beneficial was this mass emergence of anti-authoritarian attitudes and drug use?

The majority of people at this time were starting to question the traditional values of the 1950s, and to stand up to the injustices they were witnessing- which they felt were perpetrated by the government. For example, the USA was fighting the Vietnam War and sending increasing numbers of American conscripts off to fight. In 1965, the number of American troops sent to Vietnam rose from 23,300 to 184,000, and as anger and protest against the war grew so too did the people's mistrust of government. The emerging hippie subculture, supported by an increasing emphasis on drug use, rejected middle class values and wanted to stop politicians from sending innocent young men to their death in Vietnam. Capitalism was also being increasingly viewed as evil – and sat at the heart of the rebellion which came to a head in France in May 1968. Student protests against traditional institutions and values conjoined with left wing activism led to strikes involving 11 million workers which virtually brought the country to a standstill. The challenge to authority was exemplified when President de Gaulle fled the country.

Drugs were an integral part of the new atmosphere of this period, whether being used as inspiration for ground-breaking new music or as an artificial way to open the mind and encourage new thinking. Psychedelics were therefore hugely significant to the changes that occurred during this time – in fact, the revolution might not have been as impactful without them. LSD was prominent and was promoted by Timothy Leary, with the publicity generated by newspaper and television interviews with the Harvard lecturer helping him to develop a position of power amongst the younger generation, who were extremely receptive to the prospect of change. People appeared to be growing tired of the establishment and rigid rules for living and began to espouse an ant-war feeling, leading to the afore-mentioned 'hippie movement'. Drug-inspired rebellions ranged from active protests to more passive expressions of the ideals the hippies wished for the world. Attitudes were changing quickly, and the chilled-out mindset that marijuana induced supported anti-war ideas of peace and love as well as of community and camaraderie, as opposed to capitalism and fixed rules of the government.

Increasing social tensions gave rise to protest movements concerning sex, civil rights and ant-authoritarianism. One of the first large-scale, organised protests in the USA against 'the system' took place at the University of California, Berkeley in 1964 where students called for 'Free Speech' – the lifting of the political activities ban, allowing them to say and do as they pleased. Not only this, but the open atmosphere that drugs and anti- authoritarian attitudes created meant core issues were more easily discussed and protested – bringing rise to the new wave of feminism and intensifying the fight for race equality. These new ideas also brought about the beginning of a greater tolerance of homosexuality and fuelled the rise of the gay liberation movement – part of the new revolutionary idea that free love was for everyone.

Everyone joined together in rising up against the establishment, and so there was much more of a sense of community- especially when there was the shared action of protesting or drug-taking. This culture of 'free-love' clearly helped with the fight for equality – especially for women. The more open discussion of sex helped to empower women, and put them in charge of their bodies.

In the 1950s, around six out of ten women were virgins when they married, yet by the late 1960s only two out of ten women were. This demonstrates the speed of change that took place with regard to sexual attitudes, and how effective all the catalysts were in changing society. There was an increasing rejection of social norms amongst many women who were caring less about men's opinions of them. This helped drive emerging discussions of equality and was influential in the rise of feminist movements. Books such as *The Feminine Mystique*, by Betty Friedan, are heralded as sparking 'second wave' feminist movements and helping the cause to be taken more seriously by rejecting the traditional depiction of the woman as a housewife.

> The anti-establishment mindset prompted movements that promoted equality of gender, sexuality and race

Dr. Martin Luther King in the Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C. August 1963

National Guard confront demonstrating students on Berkeley Campus 1968

Music was another medium of rebellion and drugs use amongst musicians gave rise to experimental genres, where new forms reflected liberal ideals and forms of protest. Bands like The Grateful Dead and The Beatles became bywords for the political activism that was taking place. Bob Dylan, as well as The Beatles, openly experimented with drugs, and from their experiences stemmed an almost completely new form of music. These singers used their status to promote the acceptance of these new values, such as sexual freedom or race and gender equality, and young people felt liberated merely by listening to the tracks.

But rebellion against the establishment was certainly not without its negatives. As the 1960s progressed, some protests became violent – especially those by the political group the Black Panthers. They were reacting to the race violence shown against them by the authorities, but their response made it difficult for their cause to be defended by the government – which is why Martin Luther King always opted for peaceful protests.

Meanwhile, the widespread use of drugs was creating serious impacts on health. LSD caused psychological damage – hundreds of people at Woodstock festival reported traumatic experiences after taking too much of the drug. LSD was also associated with those who exploited the 'revolution' for their own gain. Cults cultivated an illusion of the freedom so badly desired – with Charles Manson and his 'family' being a prime example – using the psychedelic to make women more 'open-minded'. It also made members more susceptible to new follies, leading to notorious killing sprees.

The apparent 'freedom' gained by women was also often bittersweet. The idea of communes had its positives, but 'free love' ideals added to the pressure women felt to sleep with men, and increased sexual assault. This happened frequently, especially in a festival environment. A woman, 'Paula', was interviewed about her first-hand experiences of the sexual revolution in the 'sixties, and said that 'it was so hard to say no', due to the general attitude that, now, women were always up for sex due to their new empowered and sexually free status. Three feminists, Evelyn Goldfield, Sue Munaker and Naomi Weisstein, wrote an essay on this issue, in which they said 'that the position of women was no less foul, no less repressive, no less unliberated, than it had ever been'. Goldfield has also said that "I think there was a general feeling that the whole idea of free love was a very attractive idea to men because it meant love without responsibility", which reinforces the idea that the men were still in control in some way, and actually they were now able to 'get what they want', by whatever means, without any consequences whatsoever.

The 1960s revolution had a huge impact on society. Despite there being negative influences of drugs and anti-authoritarianism, as there always are in times of upheaval when people use the idea of protest in a way that does not improve society, these forces helped our society to develop and grow. The anti-establishment mindset prompted movements that promoted equality of gender, sexuality and race – as well as, perhaps most importantly, the freedom of the people. The landscape of popular culture was changed forever, and now people have no problem questioning – whether through art, music or physical protest. Of course, this is not always beneficial, but that does not change the fact that the 60s revolution completely changed the way we view society and the hierarchy within it, and helped us to achieve a new and vigorous kind of social freedom.

The Paradox of Indoor Ornithology

Ten toes and duty's compass
point towards my rusty door.

My fugitive brain sends an impulse down my legs,
but my feet resist the gnaw
of the electrical tsunami.
My feet obey my law.

Ten toes and duty's compass
point towards my rusty door.
The red paint peels off him
and it leaves him nude and raw.

My hand is on his blistered skin.
I try to punch him hard,
and though some scraps of paint flake off his cheek,
I cannot move his guard.

For when I leave my iron walls
my lungs become squeezed by the sky.
That's why I withdrew from that world,
and that world's people and their lie.

Of course, there are some I miss.
And I hope that some miss me.
But like the fate of pictured birds
I know I can't be free.

But I can throw my soul at metal
and it can enter yours through wires,
wires in the brain or out;
it makes no difference to desires.

Desires for attention
or desires to be loved
can both be met across poetic cords
as intimacy, gloved.

When I'm with them my quick demise
is warned by vomit breath
that tonsils bounce upstream my throat
as a portent of my death.

And then I collapse, and then
you carry me to my bleak cell.
Company and solitude
the hot and frozen shades of Hell.

Ten toes and duty's compass
point towards my rusty door.
But there's no joy in duty
so I lie joyless on the floor.

Sam Rubenstein

The Ring of Gyges (Part One)

On the tor of the Titans,
under the pillars of unyielding wisdom,
he stands, his eyes suns, and ours moons, the mirrors
of the persimmon flame that erupts from his tongue.

His pearl beard hangs below
a bulbous chin, and he bellows
through lips like waterlilies
gliding solemnly on glaucous seas.

The marble melts in the glare of the menacing sun –
it meanders home to its mother in dirt –
and the man sails down the rivers of soil,
and his disciples follow his doctrine and faith.
They earnestly plea for his insights to pass
through his vocal chords vibrating as Vulcan
conducting a choir of creaking muscles,
so the music escapes from his moribund chasm.

His song is his soul,
his teeth are his tomb,
sepulchral spit wells up in the spaces between them.

His sedative voice is a psychopomp,
and his final words flutter like butterflies
across purple heavens to patient minds

Sam Rubenstein

The Ring of Gyges (Part Two)

Descending from the darkness of the cave,
an unseen man with undiscovered gold
from aeons lost, he aims to do the brave
and kill the king, for what could be more bold
than murder in the absence of the eye
Or courtship of his queen in power's plight?
His will to might is aided by the lie
that evil only can exist in sight.

Though pupils judge, his ring does not dilate.
Its finger taps the trigger for the throne
in blood, as he consolidates his fate
alone, as Asia Minor's made his own.

Debates may range about how wrong you've been,
or moral: rather, you are merely seen.

Sam Rubenstein

Dieter Rams, save us from the biscuit boys

Sam White analyses what good design is and looks in detail at the work and legacy of Dieter Rams

On my left wrist is a watch. It has a round, aluminium, rather small face with two aluminium lugs and a black case. The hour and minute hands are black, the second hand a mustard yellow. Next to the date window is a small red chevron. The numbers are typeset in Helvetica Light, narrow-spaced. The strap is made of plain black leather. This watch exists to tell the date and time and nothing more: there are no extraneous dials, it's barely water-resistant, and it only has one crown, which you use to swivel its hands around. Its one obscurity is that I have absolutely no idea how it winds up, and that's because I didn't read the manual.

On the desk in front of me is a laptop. It's made of two anodised aluminium panels attached together by a black polycarbonate hinge. The bottom panel is moulded to accommodate the hinge at the top, 79 black keys, the letters laser-engraved, a glass trackpad, and a small recess to lift the screen, encased in the top panel up. Two speaker grilles, each comprises 3,600 half-millimetre holes, are either side of the keyboard. The screen itself is a glossy black, with a rubber rim and a few millimetres of aluminium wrapping around from the front. The backlight of the screen is used to light up the logo on the back.

There are no buttons other than the ones that you need, and there is no immaterial writing.

These two products were made 40 years apart, but they could both have been designed yesterday. The frat game "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" suggests that you can link any person in the world to the actor Kevin Bacon given six degrees of separation. I'm pretty confident that the work of Dieter Rams, industrial designer most famous for his work with Braun – the legendary German company which made my watch – is probably less than four degrees away from any design work of the last 80 years. What is funny

Britain has an extraordinary pedigree of radical architecture

about Rams is that his principles of design only made a real leap into the mainstream in a post-Apple – or, perhaps more accurately, a post-Jony Ive world. Rams' Braun, Vitsœ and his ten principles were responsible for the bulk of functionalist product design in the late twentieth-century. Now their legacy is responsible for the bulk of product design this decade.

In the 1970s, Rams listed his ten principles for good design, as follows:

1   Good design is innovative
2   Good design makes a product useful
3   Good design is aesthetic
4   Good design makes a product understandable
5   Good design is unobtrusive
6   Good design is honest
7   Good design is long-lasting
8   Good design is thorough down to the last detail
9   Good design is environmentally-friendly
10   Good design is as little design as possible

Although these have influenced our pre-conceptions about modern design, something rotten has set in in the world of architecture. I have never understood the curious separation between architecture and design: but perhaps that's because I am part of what some architects consider to be, as Trevor Dannatt termed with a wry smile, the "design underclass". To that end, this is very much an outsider's examination of the horror that is seeping from British contemporary architecture – but I think a pertinent one. Our cities are growing, heaving under the strain of colossal population growth, mitigated only by inhumane laissez-faire market economics at work to banish the poorest. But all we seem to be able to build in response are either monuments to capital, or sad, safe, mild, insipid cubes of bizarrely ubiquitous beige brick, designed with a pathological, begrudging resentment for

Blackfriars Circus

Social architecture, the construction of houses, libraries, hospitals, schools has an intrinsically communal bent to it

affordable housing.

What has happened here? Britain has an extraordinary pedigree of radical architecture. But architects seem to be shying away from the most important crisis of their practice London has seen since the post-war rebuilding. Compare today with the 1960s: a period which bore projects with names etched into any British architect's psyche: Ferrier, Thamesmead, Aylesbury, Golden Lane, Churchill Gardens. I am not a council estate revisionist – some of these projects had serious, superstructural issues which weren't addressed – but, more often than not, they competently housed hundreds of thousands of people. Can you think of a single modern housing project in the capital that engages honestly (principle #6) with the key tenets of low-cost and space efficiency (principle #2) using the radical, innovative methods we urgently need (principle #1)? This has always seemed, to me at least, to be the strangest difference between product design and architecture: that the biggest, most complex, most

Myatts Field North, Lambeth

fascinating challenge is being ignored entirely.

Sir Peter Cook, one of the founders of Archigram, decries the beige brick buildings that have cropped up around London as "the rise of biscuitism", and their proponents as "biscuit boys", who "enjoy what I call the grim, biscuit-coloured world". (As compelling a nickname as that is, Cook and his neo-futurists can't avoid my main critique of the biscuit boys: that they are avoiding today's most potent architectural issue – but at least they approach their practice with the curvaceous, colourful playfulness that defines neo-futurism, which the cynicism of biscuitism cannot compete with.) Indeed, the biscuit boys have none of the care and restraint that typifies mid-century modernism. They are sitting on a particularly ugly fence, their work neither statement nor practical architecture.

Biscuitism is responsible, I would estimate, for the bulk of new builds in London: Harvard Gardens in Elephant and Castle; Oval Quarter in Kennington; Hendon

Peckham Library

Waterside; Edgware Green; Blackfriars Circus, two-word, monotonous developments euphemistically pretending to interact with the surrounding community, while parachuting in those who can afford a studio flat for half a million pounds.

This is not how it has to be. Both biscuitism and neo-futurism represent, in my eyes, fundamentally bad design, failing Rams' Ten Principles. These were principles he made in response to the state of the world around him, a world that feels very similar to our own: "an impenetrable confusion of forms, colours and noises." Comparing them to the state of London's modern architecture is made almost cathartic by how comprehensively each of them fail. A particularly egregious—but by no means unusual—set of offenders is the Riverlight development in Vauxhall, ironically designed by Richard Rogers' practice, an architect considered to be one of the more functionalist founders of the High-Tech movement.

Walking down Nine Elms Road, on what was once a derelict (and oh so propitious!) brownfield site, it is immediately clear that Riverlight represents nothing new. Every feature of the six "pavilions", organised in rising

height order, slots seamlessly into London's catalogue of carbuncles; materially, glass and steel are used to the same unaesthetic effect as in every multi-million pound residential development; a two-level, open-plan reception squats facing the road at ground level like buck teeth; full-height windows with awkwardly-shaped balconies grace every apartment; strips of green in-between each building make a pitiful stab at establishing the building's frankly non-existent environmental credentials. The diagonal steel struts, panels of bright primary colours, bafflingly irregular shape and externally-visible lift shafts are copied over from Rogers Stirk Harbour's earlier work on Neo Bankside, and look instantly dated. Almost immediately, it has failed seven of Rams' principles. The other three – useful, understandable, thorough – I can only assume to be present because of how rudimentary its composition is. It's difficult for a building not to be understandable when all of its functional choices are so dull.

Although it might seem as if I am singling out Riverlight, there's very little critique here which cannot be applied to nearly every other modern residential development. Let's examine a biscuitist project: Triangle

There is nothing unreasonable about a return to Dieter Rams' modernism

Court in Camberwell, a fundamentally monstrous, wobbly thing. Shaped like an arrowhead, it uses two tones of brick, separating the building into arbitrarily-shaped sections like a child's drawing of a skyline. There is no symmetry, no hierarchy of scale, no modularity: no sense of architectural grace or pedigree. Windows are half-heartedly sprayed across the surface of the building in a cut price imitation of Gehry's "paper bag buildings". It's not surprising that Gehry complained that "98 per cent of what gets built and designed today is pure s**t. There's no sense of design nor respect for humanity or anything. They're bad buildings and that's it." The worst comes at the point of the arrowhead, an ungainly curve featuring three banks of wrap-around glass windows, the top window stretched to double height to look almost cyclopean: at the very least it unbalances the structure, makes it top-heavy. None of it looks comfortable, considered, or purposeful. It is an abject failure of a building, constructed with no care for the surrounding community and south east London's architectural legacy.

Compare it to my watch. My watch has a hierarchy of scale, each part of it in proportion to the other. The minute hand is half the width of the hour hand, the second hand is half the width of the minute hand. The materials are honest and solid, the colours complementary. Ultimately, it is a timeless (!) design through its simplicity: whereas Riverlight and Triangle Court already look tired through their weakness of vision, the underlying aesthetic little more than a murmur to other works. But perhaps the comparison is not fair. Architecture is a complicated art, not least for the size of the endeavour. To compare it to the mass-production of a Braunian appliance, it could be argued, is to denigrate how complex it is to design what Le Corbusier called "machines for living".

But the mid-century modern disproves the idea that social housing is a kind of swivel-eyed panacea. Eric Lyons, a household name among wonkish urbanists, succeeded in building low-cost housing projects which still look gorgeous today. Developing as an architect under the purview of Gropius and Fry's modernism, his practice, Span, was named for "[spanning] the gap between the suburban monotony of the typical 'spec building' and the architecturally designed individually built residence." His buildings were typified by light and by absolute dedication to the pre-existing neighbourhood, his works incorporating space for mature trees. He used simple, accessible, unpretentious materials, and with them he made beautiful affordable housing. Now our most prominent architects are either busy creating follies for plutocrats, or menial, grubby little studio flats. There is no modern Eric Lyons, no modern Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, no Goldfinger: no new group carrying the baton for socially responsible, beautiful architecture—with perhaps the exception of Assemble, deserved winners of the Turner Prize. Assemble are worth noting for their non-traditional background: a nebulous cloud of multi-disciplinarians, none of whom are fully qualified architects. They represent the values in architecture that

Rams represents in design, and they succeed, perhaps thanks to, rather than despite, their distance.

Why did architecture deviate from other forms of art, and why did it drift from its values? Traditionally, the two have gone hand in hand, graphic and sculptural arts meeting with architecture on points of shared cultural exploration at least as far back as the Renaissance. The key point of difference is in their economic credentials. Design has always been tied up neatly with private industry: the responsibility of private companies to seek and develop compelling products which solve consumers' problems is tied hand in hand with their success in the market. But social architecture, the construction of houses, libraries, hospitals, schools has an intrinsically communal bent to it, as it was in the post-war period until Thatcher, when publicly-owned houses became profit-making investments. Thatcherism did not have an impact on the design industry, because consumer product design could seek profit from a loosening of market restrictions and globalisation thanks to the very nature of developing products: faster, cheaper, less permanent, less essential than developing buildings.

However, with post-Thatcherite architecture came the loss of those values that Assemble are trying to bring to the forefront today. Should they have existed in the 1960s, they would have been eligible for competitions to design large-scale, publicly-funded housing projects. But, with the hegemony of small-state, right-to-buy thinking still in force, housing projects are awarded to established developers who can build quickly and cheaply, to be sold to those who can afford the grotesque markup. These developers – L+Q, Galliard, Octagon, Barratt, &c. – have proved immensely detrimental to London's architectural legacy and community fabric, foregoing the values of good design in the pursuit of quick, unimaginative, profitable constructions. There's no civic pride in these new buildings, none of the care or radicalism that defined London's architecture in the 20th century, because there's no pecuniary value in that. The demand for housing has been so high that consumer choice, the oil which greases the free market's cogs, barely exists. With limited choice, so too tenants have limited rights.

I do not believe that architects are wholly to blame. Buildings are expensive things, and with local government unable to fund developments, decent architects must make their living in the private sector, on small, valuable, bourgeois projects, or instead cater to the whims of tasteless patrons. The real failure is in our inability to fund buildings for public use and ownership, thanks to the economic consensus we have bought into. Good architecture and well-built houses are a long-term investment: but the development climate rewards short-term thinking, of fast buying, fast building, fast turnover—a common assumption among architecture practices and civic planners is that buildings may now last for only fifty years before their demolition. This isn't to say there haven't been examples of high-quality, public-funded architecture in London and the U.K., but that the

opportunities for honest architecture are dwindling, fast: after completing the Stirling Prize-winning Peckham Library, Will Alsop's next projects in Liverpool and West Bromwich were mired in problems which prevented the latter from being built.

This is why the two extremes of architectural thinking: the biscuit boys and the starchitects, must urgently converge on common ground. While product design is a practical force of good for individuals, architecture is extraordinary in that it is a practical force of good for communities. Neither current faction is interested in "community": the biscuit boys work at pace for profit, failing to be thorough or considerate of the space around them; the starchitects are gesture architects, devoted to the impractical study of the limits you can push buildings to at maximum expense. It feels, then, almost karmic that the works of Hadid, Koolhaas, Libeskind, Foster, Calatrava are literally falling apart at the seams, their buildings so far removed from the problems that architecture faces.

There is nothing unreasonable about a return to Dieter Rams' modernism. Not only do we have an incredible pedigree of radical modernist architecture, but the success of Ive's Braunian industrial design proves that Rams' values are pertinent and a force for good today. We need political change hand in hand with redirected, radical architectural values: otherwise the housing crisis will remain a disgrace to the discipline. There is no material shortage, just, it seems, a shortage of ideas. It is immensely telling that one of the most heavily-publicised "big idea" in high-density architecture was repurposing shipping containers, an idea that, with a little thought (structurally superfluous, would need massive alteration to living space, costs more to buy and transport than simply to build new) should have died on the drawing board.

Well designed homes, like well designed kettles, or hairdryers, or laptops, or watches should not be the preserve of the rich, but within the reach of all - as it once was.

Riverlight Development, Nine Elms

This Estate

In his second piece, **Sam White** combines political awareness with his appreciation of housing design in his discussion of the government's housing policy and how changing circumstances have affected the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark

> " I think, for the past 18 years, often the poorest people in our country have been forgotten by government. They've been left out of the growing prosperity, told that they were not needed, ignored by the government, except, very often, for the purposes of blaming them. And I want that to change. I don't want there to be any forgotten people in the Britain that we want to build. "

Tony Blair, First speech as Prime Minister, 1997

I always thought the Aylesbury estate looked fantastic. Maybe that was just from my own detached experience of it, hanging round the edges, interested from afar, but never enough to dare to properly explore. After all, we had been told that it was a "sink estate", a "dark zone", or, most notoriously "Hell's waiting room", a place that typified the apparent failings of British social housing. Leaders of the Opposition, from Howard to Blair to Miliband appeared there to deliver speeches, transforming Aylesbury from home to dystopian backdrop.

It was used in the Channel 4 ident, the overcast one with the tatty washing lines, and the floating pebble-dashed blocks that came together to make the "four". To reposition its shift from being "merely" a building, it is now a symbol for social housing and radical left activists, providing a frightening case study in conservative and neoliberal praxis, of how the machinery of the state at local and governmental level operates to displace the (predominantly Black and poor) undesirable.

Even more importantly, it remains a home to thousands, and our understanding of it has to reflect that. Ignorance of the Aylesbury as home, or, conversely, to ignore its problems and seek its idealisation, risks the same class-blind dissonance between theory and community that Jane Rendell, architecture professor and defender of the Aylesbury, describes:

Would the [architects] want to be pushed out of areas in which they grew up so richer people could move [in]? Or be forced to pay extra for less quality and less space? If the answer is no, it can hardly be right that they should enforce such conditions on others. Architects should understand the consequences of demolition.

It is this idea of consequence that the Aylesbury has come to represent. How do we build spaces which accommodate the consequences of a city's natural change, but protect and empower existing communities? What were the consequences, at nationwide and individual levels, of the politicisation of home?

The Aylesbury is idiosyncratic and, in places, playful, excessive and downright stupid

Under both Conservative and Labour post-war governments, consensus around Keynesian recovery led to the enthusiastic provision of state housing. Attlee's Labour government built one million new homes. Churchill's Conservative government responded by establishing ministerial position for Housing. Macmillan presided over the building of three hundred thousand new homes a year, and maintained the post-war settlement under his premiership.

Mass decanting and construction, enabled by the clearing of slums progressed apace in London and elsewhere. Under Wilson's Labour government, fifty percent of houses in the country were provided by the state, housing policy in the 1960s appears to be limitless. In short, popular, retaliative housing policies in opposition from both parties, followed through into government policy meant construction targets continually increased.

The dissolution of the "massive, inhuman, monolithic" London County Council in 1965 led to the devolution of housing to individual boroughs, the most zealous of which embarked on farcically competitive schemes. Individual boroughs became known for their preferred styles. Camberwell borough was known for a "monumentality" in its civic design and a "grandiloquence" in its aspirations. This was heartily adopted by Southwark council when Bermondsey,

The process of destruction and reconstruction would effectively lock residents out of their homes

Camberwell and Southwark merged. So, too, Hans Felix Trenton, "architectural mastermind" and deputy borough architect moved towards extravagance.

The Aylesbury estate, the elusive Trenton's masterwork, was described as a "colossal monument to the aspirations of the new borough". Far from the explicitly humanist proportions of a Corbusian or Albertian architecture, the Aylesbury's "Germanic" style stipulates mass, width, with little room for compromise. The blocks are arranged in a sinewy, arbitrary pattern, with curious sloping walkways joining bizarre parts of the building together.

Bachelard spoke about the sanitisation of modernist architecture, the sense that in chasing a perfection we lose the idiosyncrasies that make a house feel like a home. The Aylesbury is idiosyncratic and, in places, playful, excessive and downright stupid. I would argue it is its most generous qualities, its large rooms, beautiful fittings, long, light corridors, that make it a good piece of domestic architecture.

But this same excess is what architecture critics described as "gigantomania": indeed, its individual, orthogonal, fourteen-storey blocks are, as Southwark's lead architect remarked ruefully in her deposition against the estates' residents', "some of the largest in Europe". Bob Mellish, the Minister for Housing under Wilson, disagreed. For him, it represented concrete dedication to social responsibility: We were housing, rehousing more people, letting dwellings to people who had never had them before: not just nibbling at the problem, but taking great bites at it!

In retrospect, the enthusiasm of councillors and borough leaders towards the provision of social housing is striking. This was no technocracy: it was messy, ambitious and highly partisan. Council boundaries were territorial, defined by the familiar scrappiness and NIMBYism of local politics. Despite the LCC's failings, it established city-wide consistency of policy. The early days of the GLC were hallmarked by "kaleidoscopic variety" and occasionally outright chaos. This was the landscape in which the Aylesbury was planned: a politics and architecture almost unknown in our post-Thatcherite modernity, defined not by calculated need but futurist want, society's aspirations enabled by over-provision, and indeed, what today we think to be waste.

Over time, a counter-movement began to curb the perceived excesses of post-war settlement housing policy. The story of the Aylesbury is one of an inherent contradiction in neoliberalism, a victim of the change in how we view our rights within society, which harmed those presented to be the most empowered.

This sounds antithetical – it is – but as Srnicek and Williams write:

From its humble beginnings, the universalising logic of neoliberalism made it capable of spreading across the world [...] it succeeds precisely by transforming these contradictions into productive tensions. The Right to Buy policy, first proposed, in fact, by Labour in the 1959 manifesto, exemplifies these "productive tensions". It continued as Conservative policy. The Housing Act of gave people the "right" to own property that they had been living in.

Individuals would be "freed" from both taxation and rent in reducing the state's role in providing housing and reducing the individual's reliance on the state. Michael Heseltine, minister of the Environment, announced the law as radical and emancipatory – "no single piece of legislation has enabled the transfer of so much capital wealth from the state to the people" – and gratefully received a budget cut of 66%. House building figures collapsed.

This exercise in feigned egalitarianism had an obvious effect on the housing market. The buyers were disproportionately middle aged and better off, which in part has led to the crisis we see today. But perhaps as important for the Aylesbury, semiotically, the language

changed. A council house was no longer a universal entitlement. It became a sign not only of economic precarity but of a fundamental, personally-ingrained incompetence. The right to a home, for everyone, was replaced by a right to own one's home that only applied to those who had already attained wealth. The poor, disadvantaged, precarious and young were left not only to fend for themselves, but to do so under the impression that failure reflected on them, and that they should be lucky to be receive the shrinking privileges their parents had made use of to their profit.

Part of neoliberal praxis is managerial pragmatism. The trigger for taking away these rights was the economic decline that Britain of the 1970s. Thatcher's government was able to use this as an austerity measure to restrict the scope of what was possible for society to build. Successive Conservative manifestos have stuck to that principle:

that public investment is spending overhead which we simply cannot afford.

But society does not operate by the same rules as an individual, and a government is not a business. In the 1960s, Britain invested large amounts of money in construction in order that we could attain cheaper homes for all and a long-term investment. Local and national government borrow to invest for social and economic benefit. When government spending power is constricted, we see soaring income inequality, wage stagnation, increased homelessness. This situation undermines integration, social mobility, sense of belonging, and increases division, resentment and intolerance along class and racial lines.

There are intrinsic societal benefits to making homes accessible for all, to funding radical architectural solutions from the public purse: comfort, security and a more beautiful, compelling visual landscape for us all, whether rich or old, young or poor. But we cannot see that. We believe we cannot afford to. These benefits, for some reason, were possible then: but in the future we live in now, they are unthinkable.

The Aylesbury fast became a discredited throwback, a "monolithic reminder of the problems of social housing". Continuation of right to buy legislation meant that Southwark prioritised the most disadvantaged for its limited space: but were now to do so under the precept of it being a luxury, a privilege. Faced with further cuts, repairs were neglected. Panels faded, lifts broke down, the heating failed. Considering that society had already given residents a place to live, what more could they ask for?

An influx of private landlords and tenants meant that community dissipated. Crime increased, helped by the cavernous volume of exterior spaces that gave muggers space to hide, and the tangles of elevated walkways and public staircases (the signatures of a playful Brutalist architect at work) gave criminals routes to evade police. Like sick building syndrome, this sharp increase in crime was simply assumed to be intrinsic to the estate: a badly-designed building in which bad (read: poor) people lived, prolonging the cycle. That the majority of crimes were committed by people living off the estate, or that the estate had been largely crime-free previously went unnoticed. These people, the message remained throughout the 1990s were best left to their own devices.

Under New Labour, small but meaningful alterations

What does it mean for the state, operating as local government, to wall in its tax-paying residents?

were made, though the derisory budget for housebuilding remained frozen. Unsurprisingly, Labour's answer was seen to be a continuation and "humanisation" of free market policies rather than an upending or refunding of social programs. The estate was awarded £57 million under Blair's New Deal for Communities, and Sure Start initiatives enabled Aylesbury children a better quality of life. These were undeniably important.

However, the failings of New Labour were crystallised by the primary goal of the New Deal: a regeneration programme. The main blocks would be knocked down, residents decanted elsewhere with a nebulous suggestion of first option on the new estates built. One thousand new homes would be built and sold privately. It was assumed the programme would pass with ease. New Labour remained popular in polls, though the Aylesbury continued to rot.

Residents, however, mobilised and informed, rejected the offer. A caucus of local activists came together to argue that regeneration was little more than euphemism. They concluded that the process of destruction and reconstruction would effectively lock residents out of their homes or condemn them to disruptive building work, relegating them to second place in a newly-stratified property system, a motive of profit behind evictions and expulsions, and at higher rents permitted by housing association rules to boot.

Here, the story of the Aylesbury stops being one of mismanaged decline and begins to dirty. In 2005, Southwark decided it would be demolished, regardless of residents' wishes. The council published an executive statement about the estate, estimating a cost of renewal of nearly £350 million, a cost which has now come under scrutiny at public inquest. Instead, they recommended "regeneration": providing "lifetime homes" for residents.

When the Aylesbury's regeneration process kicked into gear, the council chose Notting Hill Housing as its development partner; a company run by Kate Davies.

In a 2008 report chaired by Davies, she described building more social housing as "not a fair, realistic or deliverable option".

Those in social housing escape the realities of the housing market. They get access by proving their need is greatest, often pay little or no rent, and get their home maintained in good order for free. But escape from the market is also to be excluded, and everything it offers in terms of choice, wealth and mobility.

But the report fails to suggest anything that breaks with market dogma. It limply criticises right-to-buy as predicating the allocation of housing to only the neediest families and the shortage of local authority housing, then suggests accelerating the process in its conclusion. No attempt is made to deconstruct why the housing crisis we are in is the only "deliverable" system. No cogent analysis is made of earlier social housing systems. Most bizarrely, it provides stacks of evidence to suggest a broken system,

but it goes no further, qualifying problems as unfortunate by-products, unavoidable in "the realities of the housing market".

When the redevelopment began, the first blocks to go were the ones at the periphery in 2011. But residents continued to question the regeneration scheme – despite their decade-old objections, developers had paid merely the most cursory lip-service to them, despite having advertised "mass residential consulting".

Indeed, the current scheme is almost identical to the rejected 2001 scheme, with one extraordinary difference. The number of (even nominally) "affordable homes" has been reduced by two-thirds. Compulsory purchase orders were served to residents – who had bought their homes under Right to Buy – in Bradenham and Wolverton. At best, these were fractions of market price: often under half what independent surveyors quoted. In September 2012, the council paid one resident £75,000 for a single bedroom flat, at a time where average prices for a flat in London were £300,000.

But even here we're only talking about those 12% who had bought their properties on the Aylesbury. The remaining were given no press and no say. Their rights were practically non-existent, being shipped to the heaving waiting lists of other councils or just to expensive private rentals, in turn heavily subsidised by housing benefit.

With no council provision of affordable housing, they had no feasible right to return to their communities. With no sympathy or voice in the press or wider society, they had no room to negotiate. The only advantage over the council residents had was their physical presence.

A few residents simply stayed put. Most acceded, of course, but a small handful – around 20 leaseholders – rejected the compulsory purchase order and refused decanting in 2014. A group of pensioners took the council to further enquiry, their claim to their properties laid out in the stark terms of name, address, age, bedrooms, garden, residency length. All of them still had around 100 years left on their lease.

It came and passed. Southwark revealed that they had not defined rent terms for the Aylesbury either. They refused to discuss Bermondsey Spa. They revealed that they had already spent £46 million on the estate. They revealed that some of its officers weren't qualified. It was reported on in the local press and activist blogs, but the impasse continued.

Then tactics changed. A march from what was left of the Heygate to the Aylesbury led to a ladder being put up to the lower balcony at Bradenham. Protestors climbed up into the abandoned blocks. Slogans, many still extant today, were daubed on walls or unfurled from windows. They were simple, memorable, explicit.

Social Housing Not Private Profit

Housing Is A Right

It's Not Too Late

We Want Homes Not Pretty Pictures

The flats in Chartridge were occupied from late January to March, its squatters evading eviction twice. The council responded by building a massive, gaudy, purple, eight-foot-tall chipboard wall with anti-climb steel barb around Chartridge, Bradenham and Wolverton. Original residents, alongside squatters were still living inside them. It was staffed, 24/7, by private security guards. Residents could only leave through one gate, on one side, and you could only enter if you were a registered guest.

Beyond the logistics, however, we have to ask: what does it mean for the state, operating as local government, to wall in its tax-paying residents? What does it mean to wake up with a wall irreversibly surrounding the place you've lived in for most of your life, and, indeed, the place you own? What does it mean for you or your family's security, your value? And what does it mean for our understanding of home in today's society? "Slum" clearance and population decanting obviously is nothing new. The Aylesbury lies on the site of slums dating back to the industrialisation of Bermondsey, in the 1860s. Then, the argument was: "Destructive classes…you must either do better or you must leave; which is it to be?"

Has our outlook changed? Not being able to pay rent remains a sign of moral turpitude. Sleeping rough is combatted with spikes, or other "disciplinary architecture". Squatters are evicted. Property occupation companies make millions from "hiring" people to live in vacated buildings, without resident rights but still paying rent.

The Aylesbury, architecturally, was unremarkable other than in its size. But in its symbolism – first its generosity, its universality, and, now, its attack and demolition – it represents a degradation and basic unfairness in our approach to rights.

A place to live, for everyone, of any generation, is possible. We live in a country of unspeakable wealth. But the resistance that we, as society, show to saving or recreating the valuable assets we built during the post-war consensus, shows the mortal blind-spots of a liberalised capitalism. It is this that the Aylesbury represents: its residents are casualties of our narrowing sense of possibility, experiencing the freedom of the housing market by being walled into their flats.

Perhaps it is strange that a 1963 tower block should represent a rallying cry for a new futurism. Yet to the people we left behind, how we live today is strange. Our reluctance to demand change, driven by a fear of insecurity, means that nothing can change and we become more insecure: because any alternative – even the alternative this country has experienced – is attacked for being absurd.

Which is why the bravery of those who fought to stay in the estate should be applauded and replicated across the country. Their only crime was to have bought a house, exercising the freedom they were promised by the politics which would later wall them in. And as the towers come down, and the cranes build a future home that nobody asked for and, chances are, nobody will live in, it should act as a reminder to us all that security at home is at threat from the very politics that masquerades to protect it. But somehow, I don't think it will.

The Automated Age:
Why Humans may yet Apply

Senkai Hsia is upbeat about the development of artificial intelligence and how it may not be the threat to jobs which doommongers are predicting

In an automated future, "Humans need not apply" claims influential YouTuber C.G.P. Grey. The rapid advancement of computational power will create a world in which vast sections of the population are unemployable, with robots now supplanting human labour in all sectors of the economy. Warnings of an impending doom for human work at the hands of technology have echoed since the Luddites of the 1800s. But commentators from MIT Economist Andrew McAffee to innovators like Elon Musk, assert that this time is different.[1] Because technology can now think for itself, humans are due to suffer the same fate as the horse at the advent of the motorcar.

Such predictions have consistently failed to account for human ingenuity and ambition that account for job growth to this day. This article proposes an alternative world: a world in which humans are empowered by automation and a world that incentivises the development of human problem solving, creativity and interaction as valuable skills in society. Why is this vision for the future more likely to occur and in it why are there still so many jobs?

There are two central characteristics of humanity that can explain progress; intelligence and laziness. These two traits together result in the invention of machines: tools which are principally designed to replace error-prone, inefficient human mental and physical exertion with consistent mechanical and digital accuracy. Successive generations of such machines have already changed the nature of human labour: from the mass production of the tractor leading to vast productivity

gains in agriculture to Microsoft Excel today being able to perform many tabular functions a secretary would have done in the past.

Almost all labour relies on a system of multiple, separate inputs to enable processes that achieve operational success: from physical handiwork to interpersonal skills; creativity with intuitive decision making; factual mastery whilst following instruction. For example, a successful teacher must not only have extensive knowledge of the subject material, but also needs to communicate effectively to pupils, whilst also being literate and numerate. The automation of a subset of these tasks therefore does not necessarily eliminate the remaining criteria to perform a job successfully. Instead, it incentivises the improvement of these other areas by increasing their relative importance and value.

This is the so called "O-Ring Principle" first explored by Professor Michael Kremer in 1993.[2] In this model of labour, the failure of any one of these tasks results in the overall failure of the chain of events leading to success, analogous to the plastic O-rings being the sole critical component that failed in the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster of 1986. Therefore, an improvement in any of these links increases the value in improving all the others as the process is only as robust as its weakest link. Thus, an improvement in the efficiency, reliability or cost of a subset of tasks through automation incentivises the improvement of the remaining human areas crucial to the success of that job.

Increases in productivity do not reduce the human willingness to work nor the ambition to innovate. In the "Never-Get-
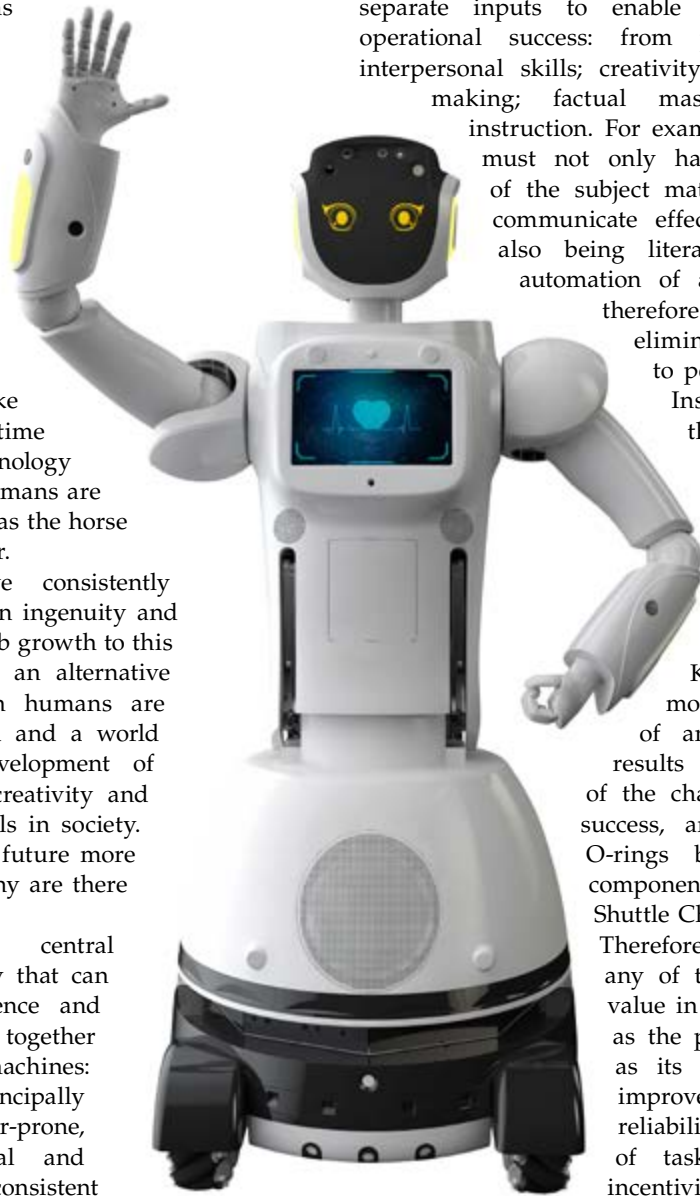
Sanbot By QIHAN Technology - Own, CC0, (Wikipedia) Are people to be replaced by robots?

Enough Principle", Professor Autor of MIT notes that citizens continue to work long hours annually despite large productivity gains bringing higher standards of living. His research demonstrates that the US worker would only need to work 17 weeks per year in 2015 to achieve a comfortable lifestyle of 1915 standards.[3] He argues that productivity gains in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, through automation, do not disincentivise the human willingness to trade off work to achieve a higher quality of life. Additionally, this principle can be combined with the fact that automation often creates ancillary jobs that maintain and often increase the demand for labour. An example is the decline in equestrian related jobs when mass produced automobiles replaced horses in the 1920s. Whilst the blacksmiths and horse breeders were the short-term losers, their job losses were more than replaced with the creation of the hospitality and fast food industries which took advantage of the exponential increase in demand from a newly motorised public by setting up hotels and restaurants along motorways.

These ancillary sectors indirectly created by automation when combined with the "Never-Get-Enough" and "O-Ring" principles result in an increased likelihood of a continued world in which automation destroys fewer jobs than it creates, with the proportion of the population in paid work continuing to rise as it has done throughout the last century.

But no, Grey and Musk say: this time is fundamentally different than the past; the machines are now able to replace greater amounts of existing labour than ever before by replicating human intelligence and awareness. Well, yes, there are different circumstances and challenges that need to be addressed. But arguments which predict a future of spiralling technological unemployment are predicated on the belief that automation will eliminate the majority of occupations in such large numbers and in such a short space of time that society and policy makers will be unable to react to this sudden change. Instead, the concern should be much less about a large reduction in the workforce but more about what the composition of that workforce looks like with greater and more rapid automation. To do this, a more nuanced analysis is required to examine exactly which tasks and jobs are being automated and thus which type of jobs are less likely to be impacted.

First of all, those jobs being automated in the greatest numbers are those of repetitive routine tasks with set methodologies and parameters. With the relative cost of high performance computing power exponentially decreasing since the 1940s, the rate at which such jobs

Ploughing – Machines have replaced traditional forms of work

are being replaced is thus increasing. Therefore, the nature of these tasks, which follow set procedures in an unchanging environment, is the reason why middle skilled administrative and manufacturing jobs have experienced a significant decline through direct substitution computer programs.

However, the proportion of the population employed in low and high skilled jobs has increased, because these sectors employ workers to act in non-routine scenarios that are far harder to codify. The reason is that they involve logic processes that are not well understood, crucially by humans themselves. Autor refers to this as "Polyani's Paradox" which describes how humans are intuitively able to perform certain tasks, often involving sensory-motor co-ordination, without actually thinking about the process at hand.[4] This explains why highly skilled jobs continue to increase their share of the workforce of employment because jobs in professional and managerial sectors require employees to have a greater analytical and creative capability with a highly educated background because they involve "higher-order" abstract thought and decision based on a mastery of expertise which is harder to automate.

Meanwhile, there has also been an increase in the numbers employed in so called "lower skilled" industries. Jobs in the security, hospitality and food service sectors rely upon an innate physical dexterity, co-ordination and situational awareness, often in combination with spoken skills, to respond to a greater variety of environments. Computers, despite massive increases in their computational power to perform set calculations, are still limited by being much less flexible than humans to respond to a multiplicity of scenarios.

Scientists have attempted to resolve Polyani's

> **Computers, despite massive increases in their computational power to perform set calculations, are still limited by being much less flexible than humans**

1 Andrew McAffee and Erik Brynjolfsson, *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies* (W.W Norton and Company, 2016)

2 Kremer, Michael., "The O-Ring Theory of Economic Development" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 108, No. 3. (Aug. 1993), pp. 551-575

3 Bessen, James, "How Computer Automation Affects Technology Jobs and Skills": *Boston University School of Law, Law & Economics Working Paper No. 15-49*, November 13, 2015

4 Autor, David H, "Why Are There Still So Many Jobs? The History and Future of Workplace Automation" *Journal of Economic Perspective* Volume 29 (2015), pp. 3–30

Paradox, but crucially they were unable to replicate fully the human processes. One method is through reducing a changing environment to one that is much more predictable. This is the realm in which most advanced automation falls into, from autonomous warehouse robots to self-driving cars. But there are significant limitations in the methodology by which computer simulate the environment around the car. Self-driving cars principally rely upon the instantaneous comparison of their environment from sensory inputs with carefully crafted pre-uploaded maps. While the car can mimic the human response by utilising its sensors to respond to real-time obstacles, when it encounters scenarios which differ from its pre-programmed maps such an unexpected tree blocking the road, it must return control to the human operator.[5]

IBM Watson By Raysonho @ Open Grid Scheduler / Grid Engine (Own work) [CC BY 3.0]
IBM took a great leap forward in designing an 'intelligent' machine

Similarly, Amazon's warehouse robots only routinise the movement and placement of the shelves which replaced hundreds of tired human runners. It is still people who then use their visual acuity and judgement pick out the combinations of items to be packaged into boxes to be sent out to customers. Therefore, even despite seemingly autonomous behaviour by robots, they are only following set instructions by engineers, while humans are still responsible for the "higher order" more abstract tasks that require subjective decision making.

The second approach is through 'machine learning'. Computer scientists attempt to show a computer a series of correct answers and then apply statistical reasoning to allow the computer to create a function which allows them to develop such answers. The hope is to develop an algorithm that mimics the correct deductive process that a human would perform. But progress in this area has been slow due to the complexity of human reasoning. The perfect example for this difficulty would be telling a computer to identify a chair. A program could be written to infer statistical parameters such as four legs or having a platform to sit on as constituent elements of chairs: with the result being it provides a table, toilet and traffic-cone as answers.[6] Obviously, any human would quickly see these answers as false, but computers cannot recognise these as incorrect without having the 'common sense' of the purpose of these objects that humans have evolved to have over millennia.

Even at the greatest magnitude of machine learning, it took the use of 16,000 computers to enable Google to identify photos of cats with a high degree of accuracy (despite still identifying a loo-role as a fluffy tabby).[7] Even despite a greater progress in determining the correct answers on average, there are still significant doubts that computers will ever be able to replicate fully the evolved human deductive reasoning in their current form.

Thus, there are still many reasons to hope that humans will have plenty of tasks for many years to come. Robots are simply unable to replicate the abstraction of human thought and decision making. This fact, combined with humanity always seeking to capitalise on opportunities and a willingness never to settle for the present, continues to drive labour and technological growth today. But there are still significant problems that are posed by the replacement of the middle-skilled bracket of the workforce. The result has been a polarisation of labour into those who are paid high wages for highly skilled jobs and a segregation of the many who now work in low paid jobs with a high supply of workers. This creation of a proletariat who serve only the highly paid and educated is no better than a world in which no one works at all.[8]

But we can look to the past for solutions to this problem. The solution is there, with education being the key to develop the abstract human skills of creativity, ingenuity and problem solving that robots cannot replicate. It will be a politically and socially fraught process, a task that will be difficult. But it is in this hope for better education that can lead to greater prosperity in a world of increasing automation, but one where humans may yet apply.

5 Jones, Lawrie "Driverless cars: when and where?" *Engineering & Technology* 12.2 (2017): 36-40.
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7 Le, Quoc V., Marc' Aurelio Ranzato, Rajat Monga, Matthieu Devin, Kai Chen, Greg S.Corrado, Jeff Dean, and Andrew Y. Ng. 2012."Building High-Level Features Using Large Scale Unsupervised Learning." In *Proceedings of the 29th International Conference on Machine Learning*, June 26–July 1, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.
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Roman Senators (1911) by Alexandre Jacovleff, via Wikimedia Commons

What Lessons can our Democracy Learn from the Roman Republic?

Patrick Coker sees positive features in the appointments system of officials in ancient Rome and argues that experience in institutions has much to recommend it

When one thinks about the Ancient Romans, a particular word may spring to mind – Empire. A mighty, sprawling state, with one man at its head, who held the ultimate power of life and death over all the peoples stretching from Britannia to Mesopotamia – an estimated 70 million people at the Empire's height. And yet for almost 500 years, from the overthrow of the last King of Rome Tarquinius Superbus in 509BC, to the proclamation of Octavian as Augustus in 27BC, Rome was a – albeit limited – democracy. It is no coincidence that the US Capitol, considered by many (mostly Americans) to be the heart of democracy get its name from the Capitoline Hill, one of the Seven Hills of Rome. Roman democracy, it is true, looked nothing like we would recognise as such. The votes of the wealthy had more weight. A personal wealth in excess of 1,000,000 sesterces was required to be allowed to stand for election to the Senate. Yet the fall of the Republic signified the end of the existence of powerful representative bodies until the English Parliament of the 1600s. The successes and failures of the Republic contain powerful lessons, some of which are particularly relevant in our increasingly divided world.

One unique aspect of the Roman system which could well be adapted for the modern day was the "Cursus Honorum" – the course of offices. The Roman Senate was highly structured and hierarchical. One had to rise through the ranks. Following a ten-year service in the cavalry, the end of their service, men of senatorial class aged at least 30 were allowed to stand for election to the Senate as a "Quaestor". Twenty such men were elected each year, and served as financial administrators. At 36, former Quaestors were able to stand for election to one of the two "Curule Aedileships" – these men were charged with the supervision of public works, and of organising games – at their own expense. Though not a necessary step on the Cursus Honorum, being an Aedile allowed prospective praetors to build up support amongst the "plebs" through extravagant events – as Julius Caesar did during his Aedileship. Having held the office of either Quaestor or Aedile, a man could run for the office of "Praetor". These were senior magistrates, whose primary function was to serve as judges in particular areas of law – such as the Extortion Court, which Cicero oversaw during his praetorship. The final rung on the ladder, the ultimate honour a Roman of the senatorial class could hope to achieve was election to the Consulship. From the age of 40, former praetors could put themselves forward as candidates for the office of Consul. Two were elected every year, such that no one man could concentrate power into his hands. These men were the most senior magistrates, and were responsible for Rome's political agenda, as well as entrusted with the command of large armies. Only the veto of the other Consul or a Tribune of the Plebs could stop a Consul's decision – they were the highest power in the Roman Republic.

The main benefit of the Cursus Honorum hierarchy is that it produced men with experience as senior

magistrates. Imagine if the Minister of Defence was obliged to have served for a tour of duty in the Armed Forces, or to be eligible for the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer one needed to have had experience in financial administration. If indeed the whole system was copied, it would produce Prime Ministers who had direct experience of military and financial concerns, but who were also adept in the legal field.

Another fundamental part of the Roman Senate that should also be employed in modern democracies is the strong moral obligations those entrusted with power had to comply with. Censors were public officials elected every five years, their duty was to control admittance to the Senate. If a Senator fell below the property requirement, or crucially failed to show the moral fibre expected of them, they could be expelled from that body. Gaius Antonius Hybrida, for example, Consul with Cicero in 63BC, had previously been expelled from the Senate for offences committed whilst on campaign, and for being frivolous with his property. The importance the Romans placed on moral fortitude does them great credit; it far outstrips our own commitment to holding elected representatives to higher standards.

In recent months, allegations have been brought against high profile politicians, including Cabinet members as well as senior backbenchers, of misconduct, frequently of a sexual nature. Such allegations, if proved true, should not go unpunished. Sir Michael Fallon, for example, was forced to step down as Minister for Defence, and yet he remains an MP. Similarly, Jared O'Mara, who was expelled from the Labour Party for historic inappropriate comments online continues to sit as an Independent MP for Sheffield Hallam. Under the Roman system, these men and many others would have faced further penalties, possibly indictment and certainly expulsion from the House of Commons. The so-called "Pestminster" scandal is a perfect example of the dangers of not holding politicians to high moral standards, and of turning a blind eye to their activities; it leads to abuses of power and a loss of faith in our representatives. The trust we place in our representatives is such that they should be shining examples of morality, and far too often this trust is misplaced. Harsher penalties should be imposed on those who fail to carry themselves in a way appropriate for a representative of a nation, as occurred in the Roman Senate.

On a different note, the failings of the Republican system also provide useful examples of how not to govern a stable state. Perhaps the most major of these is the dangers of partisanship and selfishness in politics. In the last century of the Roman Republic's existence, there were twelve civil wars, giving rise to the so-called "Crisis of the Late Republic". These wars were for the most part fought between two power blocs – the "Optimates" and the "Populares". The Optimates were often characterised

as being conservative, elite, and determined to keep power in the hands of the Senate rather than giving it to the people. The "Populares" were their opposite – they generally supported measures such as land reform and increasing the powers of the Tribunes of the Plebs. These factions battled it out for a century, bringing the Republic to a standstill. The legacies of Sulla and Gaius Marius, the two great Optimates and Populares leaders in the early 1st century were taken up by Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar, the two men who would bring the Republic to its knees. The crucial factor here is that many of these conflicts were examples of ambitious men putting party and personal advancement before country. Caesar's Civil War escalated to the point that it did because neither side wanted to back down, even though it was in the interests of the Republic that one of them do so.

Comparisons can be drawn between the actions of the Populares and Optimates, along with their leaders, and the politicking of today. British politics have become bogged down in ideological hard-headedness: both the Conservative and Labour Parties are guilty of refusing to contemplate policies that are from their opposite political "wing". Perhaps the most recent example of this is the Tory refusal to consider remaining in the European Single Market. On the personal ambition front, the constant backstabbing of the Prime Minister from within her own party, both from senior backbenchers and top ministers, can hardly be considered to be "in the national interest". Is it not necessary that senior politicians become what they always say they are to cameras, to become public servants rather than just their own?

The final lesson to be drawn from the ultimate failure of the Roman Republic is that one must never ignore the people. The Roman Republic was dominated by a relatively small number of families, whose political power meant they had remained at the top for centuries. It was expected, almost guaranteed, that scions of the wealthiest families would become Consuls – often due to bribery. The Tribunes of the Plebs were meant to be the champions of the common people, and yet in the late Republic that position was often reduced to a puppet of his patrician masters. The actions taken by the Patricians in response to the election of two reform minded brothers to the Tribunate showed clearly their total disregard for the will of the plebs. In 133BC, Tiberius Gracchus was elected on a platform of land reform, promising to push for the break-up of the great landed estates and for that land to be given to the plebs. The mass popular support for this proposal so worried the Patricians that they had him, and 300 of his followers, beaten to death in the Forum – even though the person of a Tribune was meant to be sacrosanct. Ten years later, his brother Gaius also became a Tribune of the Plebs, and he too pushed for agrarian reform along with popular measures – gaining the support of both the rural and urban poor. Yet, he too was outmanoeuvred

> The trust we place in our representatives is such that they should be shining examples of morality, and far too often this trust is misplaced

by the Patricians, who forced him to commit suicide and subsequently had 3000 of his followers put to death. The fate of the Gracchi brothers and the disregard of the ruling elites for the plight of the poor set off the downward spiral of the plebs into an angry, oppressed group who would form the armies of the civil wars.

The rallying cry against the "out of touch elites" is very familiar. During the campaigning over Brexit, much of the rhetoric from Nigel Farage in particular was railing against the so-called "liberal elite" at Westminster: they did not understand what it was like to have suffered from immigration as the disenfranchised, poor working class white people had; that they did not care that the country was being "ruled by Brussels", since they benefited. The Remain campaign ignored the resentment directed at many of their key figures, David Cameron, for example, and carried on believing they would win by a huge margin which, of course, they did not. Whether or not the "out of touch elites" exist, the behaviour of many at Westminster has not disproven that they do. The Roman Senate underestimated the anger of the "underclass" and that proved their undoing. Unless they show themselves to be truly in touch with the people, the political

establishment at Westminster could go the same way, swept aside in a flood of populism.

It is clear that one cannot simply drag and drop the good parts of the Roman system into modern British democracy. While they worked 2000 years ago, there is no guarantee they would work today. Yet the need to revitalise belief in the democratic system is urgent. Everyone assumes politicians are only in it for the fame, or the power, or the expenses – hardly a conducive attitude to have towards our democracy. Perhaps if politicians had to earn their positions by merit and experience rather by being flavour of the month at Downing Street, we would have more faith in our leaders. If we were certain that our leaders were worthy of the faith being placed in them, and were moral, upstanding citizens, we would not be so often ashamed that they are our representatives on the world stage. The failures of the Roman Republic contain valuable lessons for next generation of politicians: either they can continue with increasing partisanship and self-promotion and be portrayed as out of touch elites, or they can try and learn from history and go in a different direction, and pray they are not too late in doing so.

The Roman Forum

Robert Hooke's Euclid?

Elizabeth Wells, Archivist and Records Manager

> ' He went to Mr Busby's, the schoolemaster of Westminster, at whose howse he was; and he made very much of him…There he learnd to play 20 lessons on the organ. He there in one weeke's time made himselfe master of the first VI bookes of Euclid, to the admiration of Mr Busby (now S.T.D.), who introduced him.'
>
> *Biography of Robert Hooke, John Aubrey's Brief Lives.[1]*

D r Richard Busby (1606-1695), Head Master of Westminster School 1638-1695, and his pupil Robert Hooke (1635-1703) both deserve greater notoriety than they currently enjoy. Busby remained a household name until fading from the public consciousness in the 20th century. His fame was due to his great stature as a pedagogue: other pupils of his include John Locke, Christopher Wren and John Dryden; and to the strict discipline he enforced – Busby once boasted of having birched sixteen of the bishops on the bench in the House of Lords. Hooke's reputation has been on the rise, thanks in part to Lisa Jardine's biography, published to mark his tercentenary.[2] However, his contemporary and friend, Wren, with whom he collaborated on so many projects following the fire of London, still eclipses him. It does not help that there is no surviving picture of Hooke, although the popular story, that Isaac Newton destroyed the sole portrait as an act of revenge, is unlikely to be true.[3]

The school is fortunate to hold a substantial number of rare books, the bulk of which were accumulated by Dr Busby during his Headship. A library for the pupils had been founded by donations from Mildred and William Cecil in the 16th century. Busby, a keen bibliophile, developed the collection. In 1648, the year before Hooke started at Westminster, the school reacquired a space to the south of the main schoolroom to use as a library.[4] It was a room which Busby let selected pupils use for private study, and it may well have been where Hooke learnt his Euclid, for a contemporary remarked that he 'seldome sawe him in the schoole'.[5]

Today nineteen editions of Euclid's work remain in the school's collection, dating from 1533 until 1678. Could one of these have been the copy that Hooke pored over? We can discount those published after 1654, at which point Hooke had certainly left the school for Oxford, which takes us down to twelve contenders. A further five volumes which are listed in the manuscript library catalogue of the mathematician John Pell (1611-1685) can also be eliminated. These books were purchased by Dr Busby in 1687, following Pell's death, too late for Hooke to have made use of them. Pell's books are often easy to spot in the library; his preferred binding style in velum with a green spine label stands out. He was also an attentive, pedantic, reader and regularly annotated and corrected his books.

Portrait of Dr Busby – PIC_002_076_Busby,Richard
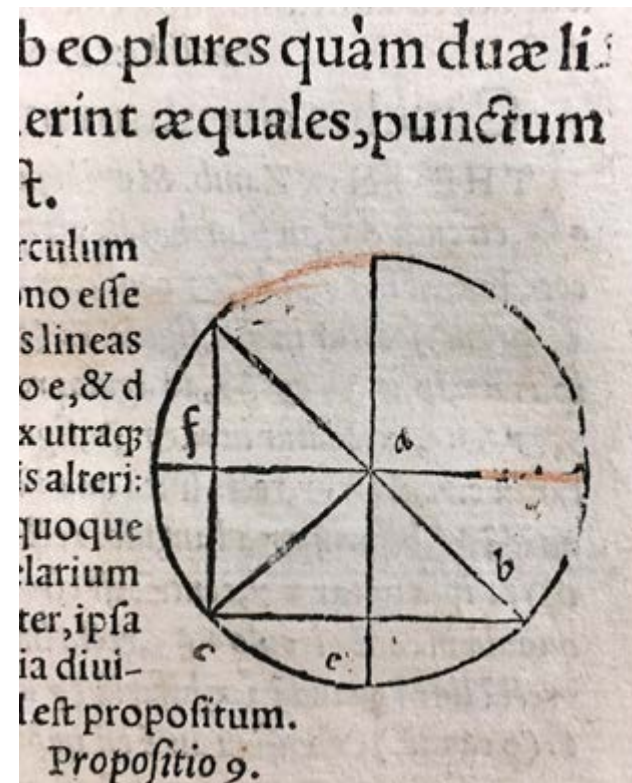
Pell corrected this diagram in his 1546 edition of
Euclid's Elements – BUS_HH_4_18_excerpt

So what of the remaining seven works in the library? It is improbable that Hooke used the Arabic edition in Busby's Library which was printed in Rome in 1594. Dr Busby did teach pupils at the school Arabic during his time as Head Master – John Evelyn records that he 'heard and saw such exercises at the election of scholars at Westminster School to be sent to the University in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, in themes and extemporary verses, as wonderfully astonished me in such youths, with such readiness and wit, some of them not above twelve or thirteen years of age.' However, Michael Hunter has suggested that it is unlikely that Hooke had much knowledge of the language, and there were certainly no examples of Arabic books amongst Hooke's own library when it was sold following his death.[6]

Title page to the Arabic edition of Euclid's Elements with a
manuscript Latin translation below – BUS_HH_6_18_titlepage

Bound as one whole are the three tracts concerning Euclidean geometry edited by Conrad Dasypodius (Rauchfuss), printed in Strasburg in 1564. Dasypodius only included the first two books in full and the third tract contains the 'enuciations' of the Euclid's books III-XIII. In a later edition he explained that he added the enuciations as he did not wish to leave the book unfinished, but that including Euclid's full work would make the book unwieldy for students. Therefore, if we believe that Hooke fully mastered the first six books we must discount this particular translation.

Our earliest Euclid dates from 1533: Simon Gryneaus' edition published in Basel. This was the first edition of the Greek text and was based on several rather poor manuscript copies. Hooke might have used this volume, but the binding is very ornate and I wonder if Dr Busby might have held this fine copy in reserve.

Fine blind-tooled binding on Gryneaus' 1533 edition of Euclid – BUS_JJ_7_13_b

A stronger contender is Henry Briggs' 1620 edition. It is a pleasing folio volume with the first six books in Greek with Latin translation, based on Frederico Commandino's translation from the Greek.

Dr Busby owned a 1627 copy of the German mathematician, Christopher Clavius', edition. Clavius did not produce an original translation, but compiled copious

1 www.gutenberg.org/files/47787/47787-h/47787-h.htm#Page_409
2 www.theguardian.com/books/2003/sep/13/featuresreviews.guardianreview19
3 blogs.royalsociety.org/history-of-science/2010/12/03/hooke-newton-missing-portrait/
4   Smith, Eddie, "Westminster School Buildings, 1630–1730" in Westminster: *The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey and Palace* (British Archaeological Association: 2015) pp. 381-2
5 www.gutenberg.org/files/47787/47787-h/47787-h.htm#Page_409

6 Hunter, Michael, *Robert Hooke: Tercentennial Studies* (Routledge: 2006) p. 14

notes from previous editors and added his own comments. It was a popular version, first printed in 1574, but with new editions every decade until the mid 17th century. This version has rather distracting flowers and leaves pointlessly ornamenting the diagrams. Another German edition, this time printed in Wittenberg in 1634, was produced by the mathematician Ambrosius Rhode. This may also have made an unappealing study, as it is a small book with dense type.

Ornate foliage floats around the diagrams in this 1627 edition - BUS_JJ_6_30_p23
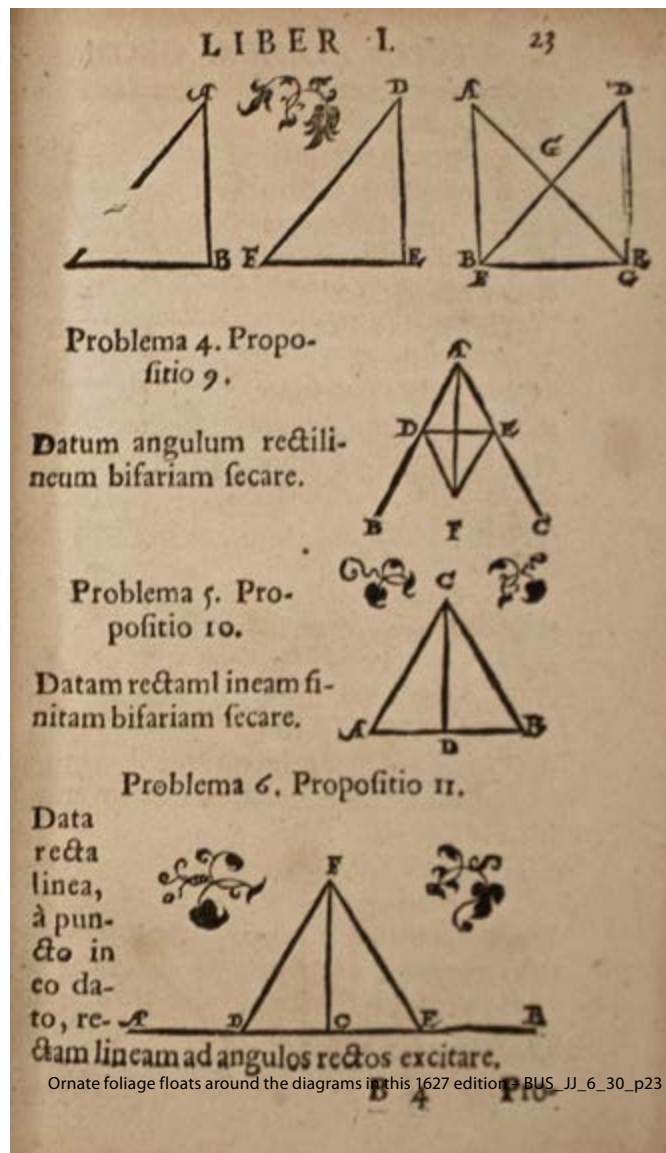
Whilst Hooke might have already mastered Euclid after two years at the school, a tempting book to study would have been Thomas Rudd's edition, printed in London in 1651. This work, unlike the others listed, was an English translation and had the benefit of an additional mathematical preface of John Dee.

Of course, Hooke may have studied any one of these five works, or indeed, a combination of the texts. Perhaps one of the most interesting point to take away from this exercise is the popularity of Euclid's work and the range of translations and editions available to pupils at the school.

Hooke and Busby collaborated on a number of building projects in later life, including the 'beautyfieing of the School & College'. Hooke appears to have acted as the architect and overseer for the redesign of the room Dr Busby called his 'Museum', which we now know as the Busby Library.[7] The room was badly damaged by an incendiary bomb in 1940, but has been reconstructed as a faithful replica, based on drawings and photographs in the school's archive. The majority of Busby's library survived the blast as the bulk of his collection was evacuated to Christ Church, Oxford, his former college. It is pleasing to think of Hooke employing his Euclidean geometry to construct this beautiful space as a legacy for his former Head Master and a gift to generations of future pupils.

The Busby Library c. 1840 -PIC_002_030_TheBusbyLibrary_Sargeaunt,GR

7 Smith, Eddie, "Westminster School Buildings, 1630–1730" in *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey and Palace* (British Archaeological Association: 2015) p. 382

Remembering the First World War

Charlotte Robinson, Archives Assistant

Afternoon Prayers at Westminster School in War-Time, by Fred Roe

Afternoon Prayers at Westminster School in War-Time

Fred Roe (1864-1947) was a genre artist and illustrator, known for his historical and military paintings. He was also a Westminster parent; his son, Frederic Gordon Roe was up Ashburnham between 1908 and 1912.

Afternoon Prayers is one of two scenes that Roe painted of the school. The other is a watercolour entitled The Lighted Gateway, painted in 1925, and the original was gifted to the School.

In Afternoon Prayers, many of the pupils are wearing the uniform of the Officer Training Corps, in place of their usual black school uniform. The original painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1918, and we have a print of the piece in the School Collection.

According to The Connoisseur in 1918, the painting illustrates "the general breaking out of English people into khaki during the war":

"The time-worn timbers of the roof carry the mind to the many generations of scholars who have passed through the school, and the numerous memorial tablets on the wall – to individual boys dying in the present war and wars of the past – serve as a connecting link between students of to-day and those of former ages."

War Memorial up School

The "individual boys dying in the present war and wars of the past" were never far from people's minds. On 29 October 1921, HRH the Duke of Connaught unveiled the War Memorial at the South end of School. This was to be "a visible token, impressive and beautiful, of the happy and affectionate remembrance in which those names were held, and ever would be held in their old school."

The Memorial to the First World War up School, photograph taken c. 1930

In 1941, however, School was badly damaged by an incendiary bomb. The original hammer-beam roof was destroyed, as was the memorial to First World War. The building was reconstructed in 1957-9, ready for the School's 400th Anniversary celebrations in 1960. A replacement memorial was designed, which incorporated an original 17th century organ. The Elizabethan, in August 1957, gave the following account of the planned restorations:

"At the South end, again below the windows, panels will be set, inscribed with the names of the Old Westminsters who gave their lives for their country in the World Wars, and incorporated simply with the main design. Above and in front of the windows an organ will be installed.

This organ, called the "Purcell" organ, was in the Abbey, fixed approximately above the Precentor's stall, until the Coronation of George II, when it was removed to a non-conformist chapel in Highbury. It eventually came into the hands of a friend of the Abbey, who presented it to the Chapter in 1940, for possible installation in Henry VII's Chapel. However, the memorial to the Battle of Britain defeated this plan, and so the donor very generously agreed to transfer the organ to the School."

The new memorial was erected in 1960, and this is the one that can be seen up School today. In spite of the lack of evidence that Purcell ever actually played it, the organ continued to be fondly known as the "Purcell Organ" for a time.

The current School War Memorial, erected 1960

The names on the 1960 War Memorial are those former pupils who died in both of the World Wars. The School Archives are commemorating the centenary of the First World War by publishing a biography of each person on the anniversary of their death.

Remembering the fallen OWW the First World War: firstworldwar.westminster.org.uk

Geoffrey Dearmer (GG 1907-1910)

Geoffrey Dearmer (GG) in 1909

One name that you will not find on the War Memorial is that of Geoffrey Dearmer (1893-1996), a pupil up Grant's between 1907 and 1910.

Dearmer was born on 21 March 1893. He was the son of Percy Dearmer, also an OW, and Mabel, daughter of Surgeon-Major William White. His mother was an artist and a writer, and his father was a priest and liturgist.

A rather unfortunate incident occurred while he was at the school. His head of house, Lawrence Tanner (GG 1905-1909), recorded in his diary that:

'Dearmer', so his mother writes (though unbeknown to him), 'arrived home feeling very sick and with his trousers slashed rent.' He had, apparently owing to having got up top in his form, been put in the big boot basket and rolled over in it while water was poured on to him! (You can read Tanner's diary online at tanner.westminster.org.uk)

After leaving school, Dearmer matriculated into Christ Church, Oxford in 1912. Between September 1914 and March 1920, he served in Gallipoli, Egypt and France.

During the war, his father, Percy, went out to Serbia as a chaplain to the British Red Cross. His mother, finding herself with no reason to remain in England, accompanied her husband to Serbia. Mabel volunteered for the Third Serbian Relief Unit, but she fell ill and died in July 1915.

At this time, both Geoffrey and his younger brother, Christopher, were on active service in Gallipoli. The following October, Christopher died, at the age of 21, of wounds sustained at Sulva Bay.

In the years following the war, Dearmer published poetry about his experiences: Poems (1918) and The Day's Delight (1922).

Dearmer went on to work as Assistant Examiner of plays in the Lord Chamberlain's Office, and later was on the staff of the Programme Division of the BBC. On the 14th March 1936, he married Margaret Helen, the elder daughter of Sir Henry Edward Edlestone Procter, C.B.E.

Although his work had been well received when it was published, Dearmer's poetry was largely forgotten about. This was until 1993, when a collection of his poetry was published under the title A Pilgrim's Song: Selected Poems to mark his 100th birthday.

Dancing with Mary Jane Kelly

Step one: the overcoat is quickly donned, to stop the rain from seeping,
And then the gloves are added, to stop the blood from keeping.
And now the door is opened, onto the London Street,
Piccadilly, Whitechapel, Millers' Court or Fleet?

Step Two: the pockets checked and patted; the tools are clean and sharp,
For years of worthwhile practice have honed this to an art.
The victim is selected; she works just down my lane,
To an end we'll put all this, her suffering and pain.

Step three: surely now that we've begun, you're ready for my truth,
I'll rid the town of all these rats, their own form of abuse.
I smile – a truthful, grinning smile – for only her to see,
And forwards does she lead me, I am her assignee.

Step four: what treasures wait within, her skin-flesh hiding all?
Soon we'll cut that open, and out of it will fall
A range of bloody organs, each are self-contained ideas,
Formed from honest bone and teeth, and packed with hopes and fears.

Step five: the beast should now be silenced; so hold out flat your knife,
Forget that she's just a woman, whose body's long known strife.
Hold her softly bleeding mind and touch the tired eyes,
Further push the iron scalpel each time she cries.

Step six: steer clear of all anxiety; I've made this move before,
The wailing stops, and all we hear, are rain to drip once more.
The balmy, damp-filled air outside, hovers on the street,
And inside all we're left with is pounds of severed meat.

Step seven: is the skilful step, requiring sleight of hand,
The stomach is peeled open, like one elastic band.
Curiosities inside – a charming cabinet,
Sinuous artery lines, wound round (a perfect net).

With each gloved finger reaching in,
To pull out solid clumps
Of pulsing tissue, human life,
With every beat it pumps.
The organs, laid out on the bed,
You must admire your work.

You walk back home.
The walk, which lifts a rhythm up.
From your feet a striding march.
Your ankles, a buzzing jaunt.
The torso twists in lightness, a match -
The heartbeat tune and perfect ambulation.

A bitter harmony here is met,
Pace the perfect pace, a reg-u-lar-ity,
Allows the night time's work to quickly burn away.

When walking, move in motion,
A constant, swinging nod,
We are nowhere at no time,
We aren't and yet we are.

If someone needs you as you walk,
You can't give them a place.
You're fixed between two points,
Yes and no to either one.

Your actions just before,
And those you take thereafter
Match meaningless to empty space,
You can't be accessed now.

And if you keep on walking,
As the clocks wind round,
And moving still, as nails grow long,
Remaining never idle

Then you will never be caught out,
You'll never be prevented,
From actions daily/nightly
That happen in plain sight.

Their eyeballs peeled,
As skinless grapes,
Will never once detect,
If you keep on moving,
You may provoke respect.

Carrie O'Toole

Alone with my Thought

I said hello to solitude
He said he'd stay awhile,
I chose to share with him my thoughts,
He said they were quite vile.
I pushed my seat up to the bench,
That we were sitting on,
He looked me up,
He looked me down,
And said that I had gone.

I asked him slowly what he meant,
And what this phrase could do.
He said he caused some small offence,
And hopes I'm happy too.

I told him 'no',
Rephrase his point; that neatly slipped away.
I told him it was rightly wrong
To just imply that I had gone.
What did he mean to say?
My solitude then spoke to me,
In voice as cold as oak,
And said that all my silence
Would soon become a joke.

I told him then,
As it was time,
To put this to an end;
That I am not alone at all,
For solitude's my friend.

The sadness came,
for sure as rain,
-Those tiny drips that smack the drain -
The minute that I said this,
My solitude stood up.

He circled round me
Touched my face,
And said to me
Without a trace
Of blueness from his mind.

Without the peace of solitude,
-the subtle peace of solitude,
The spell that breaks
If overthought,
The solitude will go.
And in that case,
He changed his pace;
"You'll be left without the solitude, and in its place,
A new acquaintance comes.

He's much shakier,
Afraid and shy,
And if you beat him,
He will cry,
for loneliness is his name."

Through the door and to the street,
With copper buckles on his feet,
My solitude
Went quickly by.
My solitude went quickly by.

Carrie O'Toole

Prester John

Where art thou, Prester John, I sing,
And where dost thou reside?
Mizrahi kings of rising suns
Know not of where you hide.

We seek thee, Prester John, because
Mortality's a pest,
For I am dumb and blind and deaf
Though all my faith has been confessed.

And like the LORD you mask your face,
And like Him you ignore
The hymns emptying from my heart;
The struggles I endure.

So thank you, Prester John, I sing,
Your wisdom will I earn.
I know you're out there, Prester John;
We hope that you return.

Sam Rubenstein

The Mermaid

Enter a woman dreamer of wrinkled and tarnished water.
   Who's this strange fish rising, shivering, shrivelling, gliding,
      thirsty eyes thirsting for shore?

        She could be any woman at all, and yet
           better mad with the crowd than sane all alone.

Legless nymph of sleepless sorrow.
   Since fear is cracked and shame misshapen,
      the water torture of her secret pours into
         The evacuated channels of her spine.

        This scar, racing down the inside of her thighs,
           left/right: both her protection and her mutilation:
              in cutting her tail, she carves out her home.

Of course, the children point and cry,
   not incurious nor nocent yet:
      why she smells of blight, white froggy
         webbed fingers and a need to have her
           brittle bones near the great opulent water.

        They know there is something they do not yet know,
           better mad with the crowd than sane all alone.

Ziqi Yan

List of Contributors

Gabriel Allason Having dabbled in Fives, Gabe turned to Hockey where he now plays in the first XI team. He has also taken part in Westminster Phab, is President of the Geography society and Deputy Head Boy. He is hoping to study History at University.

Eve Chadbourne is in the Remove.

Patrick Coker is a Sixth former who aspires to read History at university.

Gabriel Doherty is currently on a gap year before going up to Cambridge to study History. He is currently living in Paris, trying to improve his French and immerse himself in French culture and history.

Juliet Dowley is in the Remove and has a place to read PPE next year.

Philip Freeman is now reading History and Russian.

Lucas Haarmann is in the Remove and has a place to major in Engineering in the US.

Senkai Hsia is in the Sixth Form and is an aspiring mechanical engineer with a passion for debating.

Sophie Kazan Makhlouf (RR 1991-93) studied at L'Ecole du Louvre, Paris, SOAS (BA Hons – Art and Archaeology Asia & Africa) and at Oxford (Mst History of Art). After living and working in the United Arab Emirates for several years, she now divides her time between her home in Cornwall and Dubai, researching for a PhD on contemporary Emirati art.

Tamzin Lent is in the Remove. She is an aspiring journalist with a keen interest in literature and art.

Ali Muminoglu is in the Remove. He has a place to read History at Oxford next year.

Carrie O'Toole is in the Sixth Form.

Ben Philipps is in the Remove, aiming to study English at Cambridge from October, providing he meets his offer. He splits his time between London and Wales, where the library of books and music in his grandfather's old house was – he would say – the greatest influence on his decision to study the humanities.

Charlotte Robinson is the Assistant Archivist at Westminster.

Sam Rubenstein is in the Sixth Form. His areas of interest include history, literature, German, and philosophy, and he is founder of the Jewish Society. Other pursuits include reading, listening to the music of Philip Glass, and participating in the Model United Nations.

Michael Seoane is in the Sixth Form. He is interested in Art and journalism. Before moving to the UK, he lived in Russia for 10 years. He speaks fluent Spanish, Russian and English.

Sahil Shah is in the Remove. He is interested in both European and Asian cultures and intends to read Chinese studies at university.

Neer Singhal is in the Sixth Form. He is interested in the philosophy of science and plays the bass guitar. He is also a keen hockey player and cricketer.

Amelia Stewart is in her first year at Oxford reading Modern Languages.

Elizabeth Wells is the Archivist at Westminster.

Tilly Walters has a wide interest in the Arts and has a place to read English next year.

Sam White is in his first year at the Slade School of Fine Art. He is developing sculptural, readymade and written work investigating modern experience, architecture space and politics. More about his work can be found on his website: www.samuelwhite.info.

Ziqi Yan is in the Sixth Form.