



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

In Defence of European Civilisation

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European Conservatives and Reformists

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My book: Online and in print

Hannes H. Gissurarson

Twenty-Four Conservative-Liberal Thinkers

Part I



New
Direction

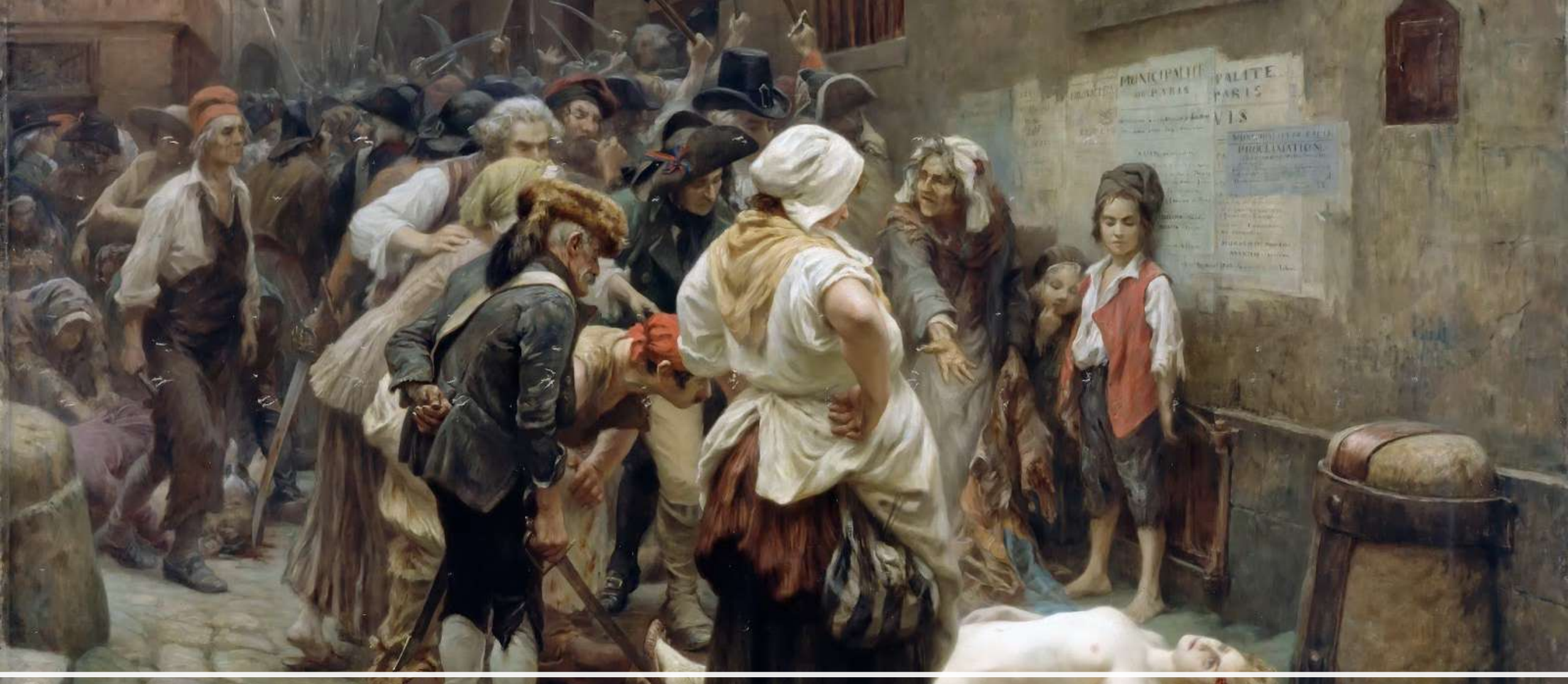
Hannes H. Gissurarson **TWENTY-FOUR CONSERVATIVE-LIBERAL THINKERS** Part I

Hannes H. Gissurarson **TWENTY-FOUR CONSERVATIVE-LIBERAL THINKERS** Part II

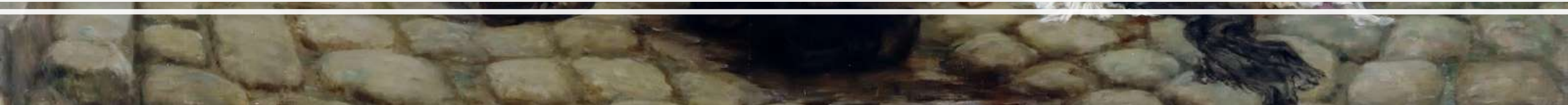
The Classical Thinkers: Locke and Smith

- Locke:
 1. Government by consent
 2. Appropriation from commons need not harm others
- Smith:
 1. Order without commands
 2. Profit without loss





The failure of the French Revolution: Terror and Military Dictatorship





Why did the French Revolution Fail? Burke and Tocqueville

- Mutual benefit is a strong tie, but the individual is not only a consumer or a producer
- In a flourishing civil society, the individual has several ties, commitments, attachments: family, friends, locality, class, congregation, schools, profession, workplace, party, associations, clubs, leisure activities, nation
- French Revolution failed because it tried to tear apart those ties, leaving the individual alone and defenceless against the almighty state, leading first to terror (Robespierre) and then to military dictatorship (Napoleon)



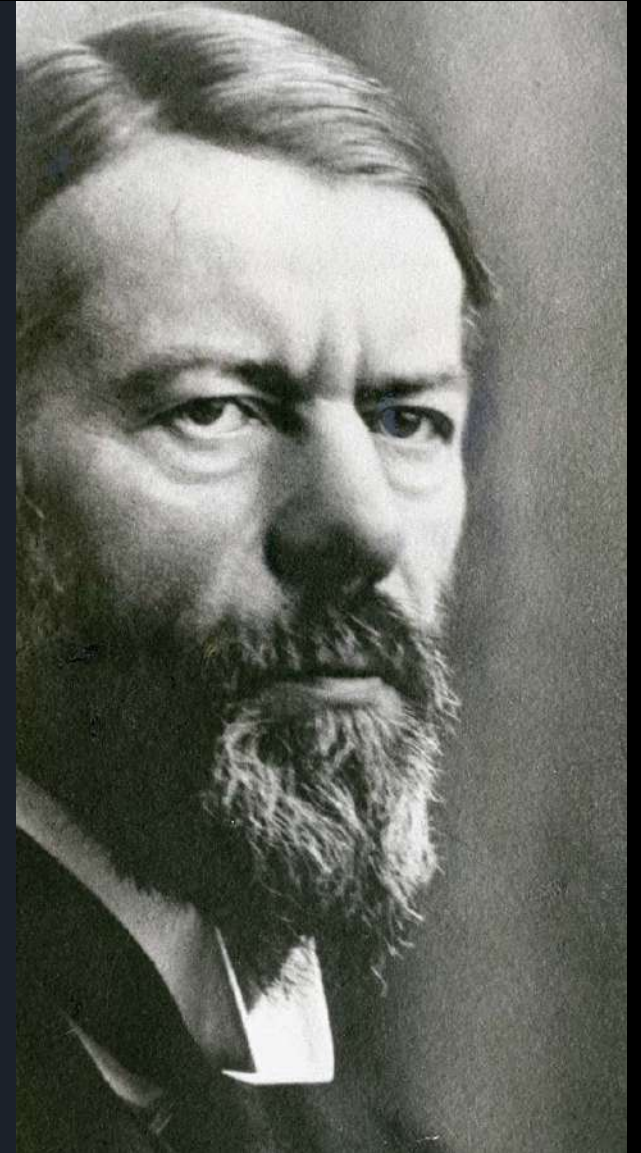


Bolshevik Revolution: Central Economic Planning



Café Landtmann, Vienna November 1918

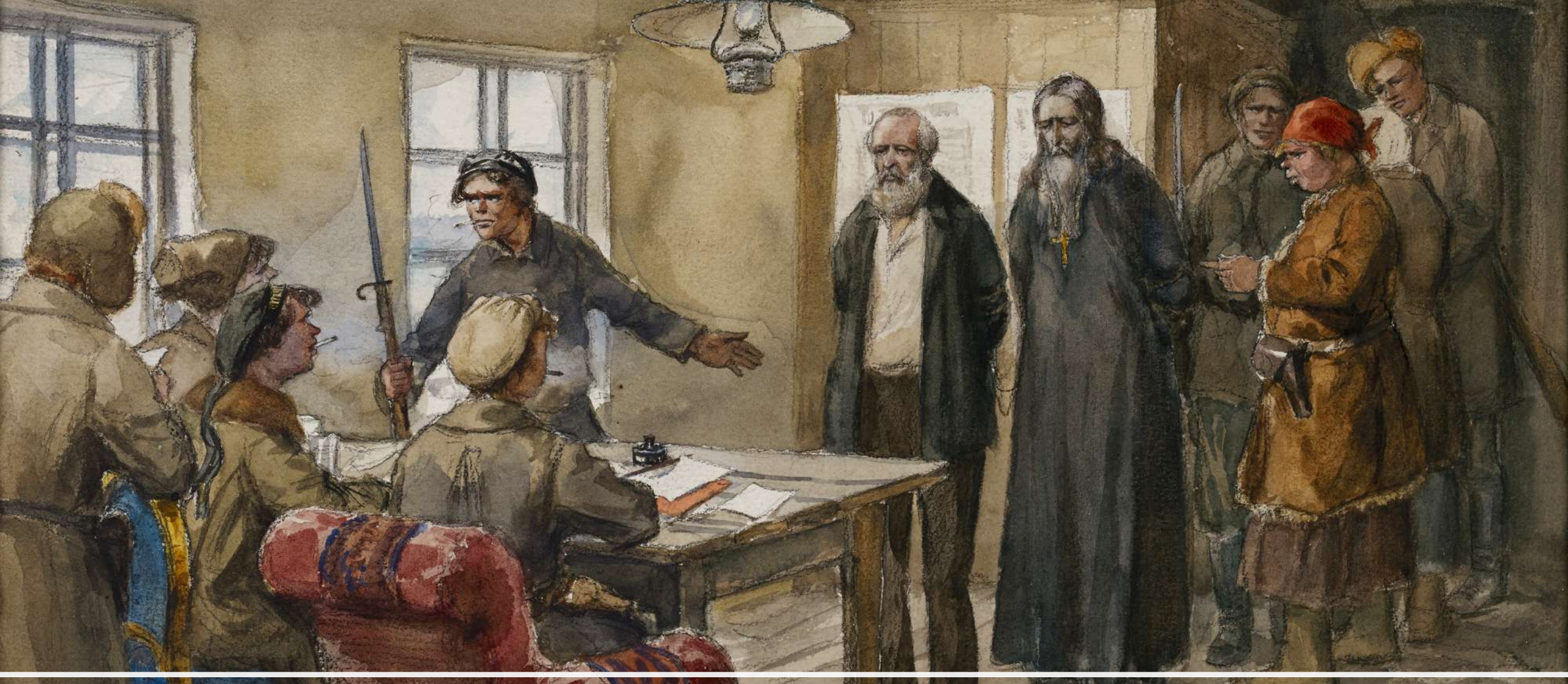
- Weber: 'The Bolshevik Revolution will end in a catastrophe.'
- Schumpeter: 'But it would be a good laboratory to test our theories.'
- Weber: 'A laboratory heaped with corpses!'
- Schumpeter: 'Every anatomy classroom is the same thing.'
- Weber: 'This is intolerable!' (Storms out)
- Schumpeter: 'How can somebody carry on like that in a coffeehouse?'





Panait Istrati's Question

- One can't make an omelette without breaking eggs
- But where is the omelette?
- Mises demonstrated the impossibility of efficient central planning
- Trabant 101



Hayek: Socialism 'The Road to Serfdom'



Hayek as a Conservative Liberal

- How can we accomplish so much when we know so little?
- Because we can utilise knowledge of others transmitted through the price mechanism and through traditions and practices
- Collective reason, accumulated cultural capital
- Theory of spontaneous order shows that liberty is possible and indeed inevitable



Contemporary Issues: Poverty and Environmental Protection

- Difference between Rawls and Piketty: Rawls worried about the poor, Piketty about the rich
- But poverty is a problem, not wealth (unless you are envious)
- Remarkable fact: The average income of the 10% poorest in the freest one-fourth of economies HIGHER than the average income of all in the unfreest one-fourth
- Why are elephants and rhinos endangered species but not sheep in Iceland or Romania? Because sheep are owned, and ownership creates responsibility
- Green capitalism: how to protect the environment by creating private property rights





Hayek's
Advice to us
in 1983

Nationalism, Good and Bad

- *Good*, natural, non-aggressive nationalism regards the nation, and the nation state, as daily plebiscite (Ernest Renan), based on national consciousness and acceptance of national values
- Reaffirmation of national identity, the collective will to preserve and develop traditions, usually based on shared history, common language and literary heritage, respecting a similar will of other peoples and nations
- *Bad*, manufactured, aggressive nationalism not about belonging oneself, but about belittling others, false feeling of superiority, urge to dominate, subdue, humiliate others
- Bad nationalism based on conquest

Economics is Not Enough

Conservatives need to know that is worth conserving: it is individuality, the will and ability to make choices

A half-truth that economic freedom erodes traditional values and communities, because it creates new values and communities, new ties and attachments

Economic freedom therefore essential: the only remedy for freedom is more freedom

But we also need stability, continuity, security, identity, and this can only be accomplished by the defence and development of our culture and civilisation

