



**Transcript of Panel 1: What should 'the West' stand for?
Margaret Thatcher Conference on Security
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The video recording of this panel is available on the [CPS YouTube channel](#).

Charles Moore: Starting at the far end there, we have Rabbi Lord Sacks, formerly the Chief Rabbi and also currently is a professor of Law and Ethics at King's College London and what's called Global Professor at New York University. He, of course, is very well known to you because he was perhaps the most important Chief Rabbi from leading the community discussion out into the wider world and putting values right in the forum of public discussion, for example, on Thought for the Day on Radio 4.

Mrs. Thatcher, of course, had a tremendous admiration when she picked up by being a member for Finchley for Judaism and what it could teach Western society. She loved Immanuel Jakobovits who was Jonathan Sacks' predecessor Chief Rabbi, and she said that she wanted to make him Archbishop of Canterbury. It wasn't possible, but it was helpful. He was very helpful to her and I think she in some ways to him.

Then we have Richard Chartres. Very, very long serving, but sadly now just recently retired Bishop of London who did so much for this diocese, and who's famous, justly so well should be if he isn't, for never having closed a church the whole time he ran that diocese. It's a unique record in the Church of England in modern times. Richard is very well known to you as a superb preacher and thinker and a great figure in our state occasions. In a particular point, of course, he was there to say, I thought very perceptively, the healing words over the coffin of Lady Thatcher in St. Paul's Cathedral four years ago.

Here we have Anne Applebaum who I claim, and I believe it's false, to be the first person to publish her in Britain. A brilliant, brilliant journalist. A very great expert on all issues. We're talking about a columnist for the Washington Post and a great historian of the Cold War. I think because we need some sort of context of history to look at this question that we're coming into, I want Anne to set the scene for us and then we'll go on from there. Anne.

Anne Applebaum: It's all right. Well, thank you very much. I'm really flattered to be in this extraordinary room and on this distinguished panel, in which I'm the only member who is not a representative of organised religion. So I'll have to somehow compensate.

Richard C.: And disorganised.

Anne Applebaum: Your disorganised religion. Well, thanks good. So one of the obvious points about the idea of the West is that, of course, it has very old origins both in



Greece and Rome and in the Judeo-Christianity. I think I'll leave my co-panellists to talk about that. The political West, of course, is something that exists since 1945, and it doesn't really appear before that except in the earlier forms. It was an organised project designed to oppose to totalitarianism.

It had an institution face and it had an ideological face. The institutions were the ones that we know. They were NATO, they were the European Union, the various World Trade agreements, the agreements by which the nations of what we call the West cooperated together and worked together in order to increase their own prosperity, and also to oppose both militarily and ideologically the challenge from the Soviet system.

It was also an ideological agreement and, of course, there were many disputes over the years over what exactly that meant, but, of course, very roughly we know the answer. It was an agreement that we're all democracies and that we feel ... not only that we're democracies, but that we believe that democracy is a better system than other systems. It was also an agreement that free markets, again very roughly, free markets tempered by social redistribution, of course, in many countries. But that free markets are the best way to conduct an economy and spread prosperity.

Mrs. Thatcher, of course, became the embodiment of that set of beliefs in 1989 when the Soviet Union collapsed or first when the Soviet Empire collapsed and then later the Soviet Union. She and not just Reagan but George Bush Senior and the other leaders of the West, looked in that year like they'd won that argument. The democracy narrative had triumphed over the narrative of Soviet dictatorship, and the West began to organise itself actually even more closely around that set of ideas almost with the kind of hubris, "We won that argument. Democracy is now unchallenged."

The most famous, of course, statement of this came from the American philosopher Francis Fukuyama who wrote, "This is the end of history. Democracy has triumphed. There's really no argument against it now. It's just a matter of time before everybody else joins our institutions and our set of ideas."

Actually, over the subsequent 25 years, some of that did seem to come true. There was the very successful integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the West, both an institution integration mostly carried out by the European Union, but also by the expansion of NATO. But then there was a very unsuccessful attempt to project that further into the Arab world, partly by military force and that failed. That was a very rough and fast jump through 25 years.

What we have ended up with though at the end of that quarter-century is something that we didn't expect, which is a moment where that very fundamental narrative, the one that carried the West through the Cold War and that carried us through about a quarter-century after 1989, is now



fundamentally under challenge. It's challenged in this country. It's challenged in the United States. It's challenged on the West European continent. There are a lot of reasons for that, that I won't discuss all of them here.

I would point to two things that we didn't expect in 1989 and that have become profoundly clear as sources of instability in the last two or three years, but particularly in the last year. One of them is the one that was alluded to at the end of the previous panel, which is the disruptive nature of the Internet and of social media. We knew that it was an economic disruptor, but the degree to which it's a disruptor of politics. The way in which social media has created has undermined political parties, has undermined traditional sources of authority and trust. These are things that we didn't expect. Nobody really expected them.

The way in which the Internet has also allowed people to reorganise themselves in order to, in a sense, find new identities online and operate through those rather than through traditional political parties was not something we expected. It has led to really a collapse of the traditional political party in many Western countries with some of the consequences that we've seen today.

I think the second thing that we didn't expect and this will, maybe, be not what some of you ... it's kind of counterintuitive, and that is the re-emergence of Russia. A country that we sort of dismissed in 1991 as really just a question of time before Russia joins us. They lost the Cold War. They're now on a path to democracy. They're going to be part of our civilization and our institutions very soon, and that was our policy towards them in the 1990s. Instead, what has happened is the transformation of Russia, once again I would argue, into a country, which identifies itself as anti-Western and as a country, which is dedicated to undermining the West.

It does that through both through using tools of social media that, I think, vary in ways that we didn't foresee, using bots and troll forums and other tools that emphasise the disruptive nature of the Internet. But also through funding anti-Western political parties of the far right and of the far left. Also, through promoting corruption and kleptocracy that has helped undermine economics and create economic imbalances all across the West.

There are other sources of instability in the West as well. Obviously, the rise of radical Islam, but more generally, what Russia and what the Internet have shown us is that the appeal of the alternatives to democracy, the appeals of the anti-democratic narrative are still very much there. We did not dis-invent or authoritarianism or the attraction of authoritarianism in 1989.

The appeal of a strong man, somebody who makes decisions without faffing around with these democratic checks and balances and due process. The appeal of violence. The idea that we can eliminate problems quickly and easily, and really the appeal of much more forms of ethics and religious



identity that are anti-democratic. I think we didn't understand that in 1989 and that, I think, have come to the fore in the recent Western elections.

I will leave the further discussion to my other panellists. I mean, obviously, I believe that the fightback of democracy or the way in which we can re-assert the democracy narrative will require us to really identify the problems that are coming from Russia, that are coming from the Internet, and find new ways of asserting the Western ideas in the face of those things. Thank you.

Charles Moore: Thank you, Anne, very much. Anne's mention of the Internet reminds me what I should have said before is that please, send in your tweets and so forth by the time the panel have finished their opening remarks, and no trolling, please. We'll be getting that from wider sources, I expect. Now, I think this moves very easily to Jonathan Sacks. I know Jonathan you're interested in taking out the idea of democracy and going further in all that. Please, tell us what you have to say.

Lord Sacks: Yes, Charles. Can I add what a privilege it is to be in this forum and to have had the privilege of listening to Henry Kissinger. It's just reformulated a song of my youth, which should now get will you still need me, will you still heed me when 94, which is a source of hope that I wasn't expecting to have this morning. I feel much energised by.

The real question I want to pose is, which Western values? Which West? And here I want to tend to a distinction made by one of Margaret Thatcher's favourite thinkers, Friedrich Hayek who, in the Constitution of Liberty, distinguishes between two traditions of human rights, what he calls the Anglo-American and the French. They are very, very distinct.

The French one famously, the revolutionary Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen [Declaration of the Rights of Man] of 1789, "All men are born and remain equal in rights." The American Declaration influenced by Locke via Jefferson, which says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

They sound similar. They are in fact extremely different in three respects. Number one, the French declaration is clearly and emphatically a secular one. The American one is clearly and emphatically a religious one. It talks about the Creator endowing human beings with rights. That is what Tocqueville meant when he said that in France, I saw the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty marching in opposite directions, but in America, I found them going hand in hand.

Second, the French formula was a formula for maximal government. In other words, human rights constitute an ideal template, which it is the job of governments to implement. The American, the Anglo-American tradition, was a formula for limited government. Rights were not something guaranteed by



the state to the country. That was a statement of saying that there are certain areas - life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness - which are bluntly not the state's business. It's a formula for limited government.

Number three, the French formula was based on atomic individuals separate from their constitutive attachments, their families, communities, faith traditions, and so on. It's a point that Burke made very forcibly at the time. Whereas the Anglo-American one was predicated on a very strong civil society, families, congregations, communities, charities, and all the rest of it, standing between the individual and the state.

So we had two very different traditions in the West, and the cultural climate change, almost unnoticed, that just happened in the past half-century is that the French version has taken over the elites in both England and America, so we are all French now. Now is pretty bad news for anyone who believes that the Anglo-American tradition has something to be said for it.

The French tradition leaves very little between the individual and the state. The end result of that is when the individual feels that the state is not meeting its needs, it turns to populist politics because private individuals shown of families and communities, which are dying on their feet in Britain and America feels powerless. Hence, turns to strong leaders to defeat (a), the current elites and (b), the outsiders, whoever those outsiders are, and populist politics is the beginning of the end of liberty.

I would like to see a reinstatement of those Anglo-American values at least in England and America because the greatest danger facing the West is not the one we've been talking about. The one we've been talking about is real and significant. We have four ancient and extremely dignified civilizations that have felt marginalised by the modern world and are now reasserting themselves namely Russia, China, India, and Islam. Those four traditions are reasserting themselves in powerful ways and there is not a lot we in the West can do except hope that it happens in a benign way.

The great danger is the moral vacuum at the heart of Western political structures. The French system believes that liberty is a political achievement. The Anglo-American tradition believes that freedom is at least also a moral achievement, and without moral substance born and cultured and cultivated in families, communities, and traditions, some religious and some national, the West will be left with a vacuum out of which disorder will follow.

Charles Moore: Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, again with a certain logic we move on. We have two men of God here. The same God, but what you might call a different franchise. Now let's hear Richard Chartres.

Richard C.: Do I hear a great rain?

Charles Moore: Yes, you do.



Richard C.:

Well, I hope it's going to be après moi le deluge [after me, the rain]. But I want to approach what's been said from a slightly different angle. I was very impressed by Henry Kissinger's opposition between co-evolution and confrontation. I think that if we are going to move into something more like co-evolution, one of the first things that's required is a healthy dose of humility. As we know rather a hubristic application of the French version, I think, in the recent past.

I think the very first rule in becoming a mature human being is to refuse to be a little tin god, and there is a very little possibility of co-evolution without that humility. But I want also to draw on Anne's comments on democracy because, of course, that's at the centre of what most people mean by Western values. But it's a disputable concept now for very important reasons, and some of which have been glanced at.

It should be obvious that democracy requires, first and foremost, a demos. A people that co-hear some sense of shared moral compass, some coagulation, some songs to sing in common. One of the saddest things in this country is to go to all sorts of events and discover the people have virtually no shared memories, no songs to sing in common beyond that appalling duty, "Happy birthday to you." That's about it. So no songs to sing in common.

What happens is that the demos disintegrates, and what follows is empowered by social media, a crowd of atomised individuals where there is a referendum a day. I spoke in the debate in Parliament on the Referendum Bill and invoked Burke because we have a democracy, in the Anglo-American tradition, that really provides time for reflection, for consolidating some consensus, which was another very brilliant [inaudible 00:20:02] of Henry Kissinger.

Now we have a referendum a day and the demos was disintegrated into a crowd of atomised individuals. Aristotle examined this state of political evolution. What he said was what comes next is tyranny. I think we are probably inoculated against strange little men in jackboots and toothbrush moustaches. But administrative tyranny, the tyranny of thousands of inspectors and regulators, I think, in a way that Mrs. Thatcher would abominate. That kind of administrative tyranny is not inconceivable.

So what's to be done if there is this evolution? It seems, to me, very obvious that we have to remember. We have to dig into the roots of the Western tradition once again. I used to be a bishop in the East End. I remember being part of some very low-level rioting and going around saying, "We must respect other people's cultures. It's very important indeed." I was confronted by one young man at one of the schools who said, "Well, what's my f'ing culture then, Bish?" He had a sense of real poverty, real absence.

I've kept in touch, ever since, with people who teach in the East End, people who are in our school system. The accent on technique and skill leaves the



curriculum virtually content free when it comes to the sort of questions we're discussing here this morning. It seems absolutely obvious that throughout history, the question of how to live well has been a central question. It does not appear, it seems to me, beyond sexual adultery, good health. It doesn't really appear in our educational system.

So if you want to demos, if you want to have a West where the best do not lack all conviction while the worst are full of a passionate intensity, we have to remember our roots. We have to reinvest in those little platoons, as Jonathan says. I always remember a remark that you made. You made about your father. Your father was also brought up in the East End. You said about your father, he wasn't rich, but he certainly wasn't poor because he had his family and he had his faith. That seems to me to be something we can't neglect today.

Charles Moore: Thank you very much. We're getting some questions in, but to take this a tiny bit further about the demos. You're obviously very worried, and I know from what you've written elsewhere, you're very hostile to Trump and you're worried about Brexit. There's an argument that these are expressions of democracy. The demos is getting very, very fed up with the elite, and that the demos cease to believe that there really is a democracy because somehow this elite is unreachable and doesn't listen to them.

So there's a desire to bring things home, in the case of Britain, actually bringing sovereignty home and in the case of America, the Middle America, to get power over Washington and so on. Is that all illusory? I mean, you're very worried about the dangers there, but do you see why that tension would exist? Partly, it's a tension between nationalism and internationalism.

Anne Applebaum: Yes, I do see why the tension exists and I do see why people are frustrated. What worries me and what worried me in particular about the Trump campaign is that what we're watching is a set of false promises being made. So it's not just that Trump is saying, "I'll bring home the decision-making." What he actually said to people was, "I'm going to fix everything." If you remember his famous conventions speak was, "I can solve it. I will do it."

This is the classic, we saw this in Venezuela. There was actually a Bolshevik revolution version of this. We've seen it in other parts of the world. This is the classic strongman promise. What Trump has done, even since being elected, has not been to return power to the people or attempt to involve people in decision-making. He's done something quite different, which is to continue this string of lies and continue to ... and really to keep power very secretive and to make actually the White House less transparent than it was before.

So what we have just seen is people being duped into believing they were voting, maybe some people believing they were voting for something more democratic and getting quite the opposite. I think Brexit is actually different



from Trump and I usually resist the comparison, although what I do fear about Brexit is also that people were promised things that won't be delivered.

Really what I'd like to return to in both cases is a problem that I think Western politics have had for the last couple of decades, which is almost as if having defeated Marxism, we then adopted one of its tenets namely, the belief that politics is all about economics. Really based to determine superstructure, all the arguments the electric need to be made about. At one point here, they are in tax. The British actually are particularly guilty of this. I can remember many British election campaigns where people were fighting over will you pay more or less tax? Will this cost more or less?

I think a lot of Western politics, particularly actually Anglo-American politics and there a lot of different reasons for this, have tended to focus on politicians saying, "I can bring you prosperity and I'll make you richer," and that was the most important political argument. The result of that is that people began to look for other things in politics. People want things that are politics other than money. Money is very important and well-being is important and prosperity is important, but people really have a broader definition of what politics should be.

I think in both of those two election campaigns, the referendum campaign and the American campaign, what I feared was is that people felt they were being offered something bigger, some bigger idea or something that appealed, that was really a cultural appeal. In the case of Trump, I think it was sort of appeal to some kind of white Christian identity. In the case of Brexit, it appealed to some idea of British sovereignty that people felt was higher than economics.

One of the things we found striking about the Brexit campaign, I think Nigel Farage at one point was asked, "Aren't you worried that Britain will be poorer after this?" He essentially said, "I don't care. This is more important." I worry that people were a little hoodwinked by that and they weren't listening carefully. But I do think that the offer of something greater than money explains those two campaigns.

It also partly explains the Macron campaign in France, where you saw somebody who was also trying to offer people something more than just, "You'll get richer." He wasn't arguing that at all. He was saying, "I'm offering you a different vision of France. It's going to be hard for some people, but we need to adjust to the world," and so on. I think the solution is political, but in politicians understanding that there are higher things.

Charles Moore:

On that, the panellists agreed, but I don't want to lose track of the values point that Jonathan and Richard were talking about. But can I just pursue a bit further with them something arising from that, which is in the Cold War, there was a close association between what we revolutionary call values and strong politics about things like defence, and security, and the nature of



alliances. That was very much embodied both by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Mrs. Thatcher first became famous in the world because of something she said about the Cold War. That actually gave her her name the Iron Lady. That was given to her by her opponents. It was given to her by Red Star, the newspaper of the Red Army, who said she's the Iron Lady. They meant it as a joke because it was a sexist joke, how can a woman be iron?

Of course, she saw how it was such a wonderful name to be given by her enemies, and she took it up with great joy. There's a famous bit of film with her wearing a chiffon evening gown and saying, "Yes, here I am with my hair gently waved, and so on, "but I don't mind being the Iron Lady of the Western world if that means I'm defending our values and our liberties against Soviet communism," and so on.

Far from seeing on the one hand, domestic stuff and personal values and family, and on the other hand, high global politics, she saw them all as together. That was a very, very powerful message. It seems to be very hard to have that message now. Is that a statement about her morality or is that because of the fact about the state of the world? Jonathan, do you ...

Lord Sacks:

I think Richard was right in mentioning the word demos to have a democracy, and what Margaret Thatcher so expressed so powerfully is what it was to be British, what it was to be English. I don't want to get into that nuance. I remember when she first entered parliament. She was described as a parliamentary Boudicca with a Hansard in one hand and a hand pin in the other. She was magnifique in that role. She kind of embodied a national pride, which very much identified with the people. She was in that sense a politician who appealed over the heads of the politicians to the people.

What's been breaking down in Britain and America is a sense of what that people is or that beautiful phrase, which is central to American politics, we, the people. The reason I knew something was going askew in American politics is when the two most profound observers of American society, one from the right, Charles Murray of the American Enterprise Institute, one on the left, Robert Putnam of Harvard both published books.

Charles Murray, *Coming Apart*. Robert Putnam, *Our Kids*, which said in effect that the American story has broken down for half of America. Half of America, the America you read about in *Hillbilly Elegy* and *Strangers in Their Own Land*, the America of the, what do they call him, flyover states, the poor whites. That half of American no longer identifies with the American story because social mobility has declined almost to frozen form today in the last 40 years. The vast mass of Americans have seen their real standards of living static or declining. The American dream is no longer theirs.



Now take the English equivalent. I didn't close synagogues, but I did once in a while officiate at funerals. I remember a whole generation of Anglo-Jews had engraved on their tombstones a proud Englishman and a proud Jew. I can tell you today, Charles, what it is to be a proud Jew. I can't tell you what it is to be a proud Englishman. That was what UKIP and what Brexit were trying to rectify.

Our problems are global, but our only functioning political institutions are national. Tip O'Neill said, "All politics is local." Therefore, we have to recover that sense of being in this together as a nation. That is what is missing today from the elites. But there aren't awful a lot of people who feel the elites are cosmopolitan and they owe no particular loyalty to this country or that.

That is what we are failing in our duty to immigrants because when my parents came over, they knew exactly what it is to be English. Jews spoke Yiddish for 1,000 years. They said about one of my predecessors that he spoke 10 languages, all of them Yiddish. Jews lost Yiddish in one generation because my parents insisted and all their generation insisted that we, their children, were good Englishmen and women.

Today for Muslims, for Sikhs, for Hindus coming into Britain, what is this national character to integrate into? That is leaving them estranged. So strengthen the nation and you will strengthen that entire constellation of values that allows the West to stand out for itself.

Charles Moore: Thank you.

Richard C.: I just want to follow that up with one Henry Kissinger's other marvellous perceptions that there is an American view of a certain normality to which they are always trying to return the world by sorting out various problems. I think the roots of what Jonathan is talking about are partly complacency. We've done very well out of history and there's a sense that this is the normal pattern of life. There's also a rather more sinister view that we're going to build a brave, a happier, more tolerant world by purging memories, by abolishing memories.

It's very interesting that in the introduction to his autobiography, Tony Blair, says that he's going to describe the events of his premiership not as a historian because obviously he has no patience of that but as a leader. One of the problems in life, of course, is that if you're just a person of memories and backward looking, you're pretty tedious. But if you're a person of destiny and no sense of history, you're very dangerous.

We've got a mindset, which was actually swept the room, and you don't exercise the Satan by creating a spiritual vacuum. But how do you actually put remembering in the service of new challenges, and this is your question? The tectonic plates geopolitically are shifting. Unchallengeable Western



hegemony, which has been the state for the last 250 years, is giving way to something more genuinely multipolar.

So we come back to Henry Kissinger's co-evolution or confrontation. But you cannot have fruitful creative co-evolution unless we are clear about what we bring to the marriage, about what our contribution is. Therefore, this idea that you create something more kind and tolerant by abolishing particular memories is exactly contrary to what we need to do.

Charles Moore: Anne then.

Anne Applebaum: Can I just add one piece to that? Which is that I agree with your point about the demos and the point about being clear about what we stand for is, of course, vital to renewing our political systems and our democracy in this country. But I would like to just remind you of Charles's original question, which is isn't there also a point to be made about renewing the idea that we are a democracy in a community of democracies. That there are ways in which the fact that we live in this community, it helps reinforce our system too and our values as well.

So seeing Britain as connected to the United States, but also connected to France and Germany in a thriving community in which we share values in which we share ideals is also part of that re-strengthen process. What I don't want to happen in Britain after Brexit is that Britain shrinks into itself and sees this as something it needs to do as a single country. Actually, as Kissinger also said at the end of his remarks, I would like to see Britain also thinking about how to renew the Global Alliance, the Transatlantic Alliance, how to renew its relationships with Europe as a way of strengthening itself and looking beyond itself.

Charles Moore: Thank you. I've got several questions and really they circulate around roughly the same point, so I can pick almost any of them and it will come near to it. In an increasingly multicultural West, is it still important to continue asserting Judeo-Christian values or is it now time for the West to move towards secularism? There are other versions of this question, some more hostile to religion and some more favourable to it. Also, related to that another question. You speak of Judeo-Christian values, but the questioner says, "Shouldn't you add Judeo-Christian-Islamic values?"

Richard C.: Well, you could say Abrahamic values-

Charles Moore: Abrahamic. Yeah.

Richard C.: ... or something like that. It seems to me that if you abandon that strand in our story, then it doesn't put you in a very good position to understand the stories of others. It doesn't equip you with the ability to reach out and engage in this process of co-evolution. One of the most significant failings in our diplomacy and international relations is precisely the sense that surely all intelligent



people are secular and you can't possibly entertain any of these religious worldviews. I think that's been one of the great weaknesses and one of the facts, which has blinded us to developments in the rest of the world.

So I would say that part of the remembering has to be the fact that all men are created equal. Where does that come from? These truths are not self-evident. They have not been self-evident to most of the world's cultures in most of its centuries. They come from the scriptural view that all human beings were created equal in the image of God. I mean, this is an astonishingly, an explosively revolutionary concept, which is not at the centre of many other cultures in the world.

Lord Sacks:

I have a fairly unusual CV for a Chief Rabbi namely that my primary school was St. Mary's Church of England Primary School and my secondary school was called Christ's College. That's, in fact, how I knew Margaret Thatcher first because she was my local MP and I was studying politics. Whenever I had an essay to write, I used to go along to her in her surgery and ask for her views on the subject at hand.

On one occasion, I had to write an essay on proportional representation. I said to Mrs. Thatcher in her surgery, "What do you think about proportional representation?" She looked at me and she said, "You're not a liberal. Are you?" I declined to comment further on that one. But the fact that the schools I went to were confident in their Christian faith, meant that they understood that just as their faith was important to them, so my faith was important to me.

The end result was I learned from that school a far more tolerant experience than I think I would have done had I gone to a secular school that regarded all faiths as nonsense. In fact, I never met, among Christian and Muslim friends, someone who is as intolerant as the new and very angry atheist. Never tell a joke to an angry atheist. They simply don't have a sense of humour. I think having a strong faith allows you to understand the significance of other faiths to authoritarians and indeed of the great humanist traditions as well.

I think the Church of England has been a magnificent exemplar of that because it did make space for Catholics and Jews and Sikhs and Hindus and Muslims. That's number one. I don't think Judeo-Christian values are the only ones that there are. I respect Indian, Chinese, Russian, and others, but they are who we are or who we historically were, and to have that confidence in those values is inclusive and embracing and not in any sense exclusive.

The other point I want to make and it's a really important one is that as I have researched it, the first account I have ever found in religious writing for freedom of speech comes from the great Muslim thinker of the 12th century, Averroes. Averroes is the first person who says that if you are confident in your faith, you need fear no opponent, therefore, let them speak freely. Averroes, as a Muslim, is the first person I know who puts that view forward.



It is then quoted by one of my ancestors Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague in the 16th century in the name of Averroes. So Judaism got it from Islam. A half century later, John Milton makes the same point in his defence of free speech, *Areopagitica*. Then, of course, two centuries later on, a humanist, John Stuart Mill, makes the same case on liberty. So here is a lovely defence of tolerance and freedom began in Islam, then communicated to Judaism, then Christianity, then to a great humanist tradition. So I do think the Abrahamic faith, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are a family here who should face the future confidently together in co-evolution.

Charles Moore: By the way, in the Liberal Party when it was still called the Liberal Party rather than Liberal Democrats, every year at the party assembly, a copy of Milton's *Areopagitica* was handed from one president to the next. Now they don't do that. They hand over Mill's *Liberty*. They didn't like the religious aspect of it. So it's the same tradition, but they're worried by the religious aspect of it.

Richard C.: It's a tree that if you cut off its roots, I'm sad to say, will die.

Charles Moore: Yes. But let's be tough about the Islamic question because obviously, I imagine everyone in this room would applaud the attempt by Jews and Christians and Muslims to find common ground and to find the common tradition, which is obviously overwhelming there because of being Abrahamic. But that's not the whole story, is it? We have a massive problem in this country right now, which expresses itself, and not only in this country. It's not special to this country, it has some special aspects. It expresses itself literally in people killing other people.

You can tell if somebody walks into this room and shouts, "Allahu Akbar," I'm afraid we all duck down. Whereas if somebody comes in and shouts, "Jesus Christ is Lord," you just think he's a bit of a lunatic and try to sort of help him out of the room so we can continue with the proceedings. So what is actually happening is that people are very, very frightened. While it must be true that the people who are killing people in the name of Islam are not good Muslims, they are Muslims. I saw a picture this weekend of the end of Eid being celebrated in Birmingham. It was reported that 100,000 Muslims had come out and prayed to celebrate the end of Eid.

I asked myself, what do you feel about that? I think a lot of people would feel a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, I was very impressed that a faith can bring out 100,000 people in an orderly way and they all pray, which is a prayer invigorate characteristic of religion. But on the other hand, do I really want enormous numbers of Muslims on my streets praying because in a way by doing that, they're asserting something about the importance in the society and about, if you like, a sense of taking ground?

In other words, how much is this just a shared thing, which we all equally welcome one another and how much do we feel threatened even though we're completely wrong to feel threatened? A lot of people do feel threat.



Where does all this go? I mean, it's very hard to talk about because people worry about causing offence and rightly so, but it is important, isn't it? It's not resolved. It's getting worse, actually. Do you want to say something, Anne?

Anne Applebaum: I would begin by saying remember that one of the other ... We've had several quotations from the Declaration of Independence and the American Founders whose ideas, of course, came from this country. But one of the really important and central founding ideals of the United States of America, in fact, one of the reasons why people went there in the first place was that it was a society, which was founded as one that was religiously tolerant.

While people had faith and individuals had faith and institutions and organisations had very deep faith, the state actually was secular from the beginning. That enabled different kinds of people with different views to live within it so long as they accepted that central value. So I have to say that I'm not bothered by Muslims being organised and peacefully praying on the streets of Birmingham at all because those are people who have accepted the central tenet of the society, of British society, which is that it is religiously tolerant. That it believes in the rule of law that those people will not then threaten 100,000 Christians if they want to come to celebrate mass either.

What I think does threaten this country and what threatens the West are forms of religious fanaticism that are profoundly intolerant and the form of Islam that is intolerant. And actually the white supremacist Christian ideology, which is also very intolerant, which we've seen in the United States, and which is the form of Christianity promoted by Putinism.

These, I feel, to be genuine threats. These are things I'm afraid of and I feel that we should try to defeat. So I'm not sure that religion means nothing when you say in general all religions are good. That doesn't mean anything. What we mean in the West by religion's positive contribution is the kind of religion we hear on this panel, which is really a view of religion that is profoundly tolerant and profoundly accepting of democratic values.

Richard C.: One of our problems, of course, is a sheer lack of religious literacy. One of the difficulties about our approach to the rest of the world is the attempt to empty religious fanaticism about which you're talking into other categories, supremely economic categories. This is poverty. This is all sorts of things other than religion. It reminds me of the situation in Ireland until comparatively recently, where the first thing you'd be told was, "Of course, it has absolutely nothing to do with religion." Well, which is evidently absurd.

What we've got is false and lethal religion and we don't have the categories, the understanding to realise what idolatry is. Idolatry is making a god in your own image, and what we've got at the moment is bruised and humiliated egos surreptitiously re-ascending to worship some projection of their own rage and lust for power. It's got to be taken seriously in terms of as Muslim scholars do. I used to be co-chairman of a body with Ali Gomaa, the previous



and very distinguished Grand Mufti of Egypt. We utterly agreed that this particular phenomenon had to be identified in its theological terms as an idolatrous perversion of the faith. You need all sorts of responses to what faces us. You need, of course, much greater security. You need to finance the police. You also have to have a rather greater religious literacy.

Charles Moore: But there is a relation between, it's not only ideas here and beliefs. It's also to do with willpower. I wanted to ask because in a post-Cold War era, how does that begin to feel? For example, in Britain, the first time we felt this issue and it was related to willpower, really was when Mrs. Thatcher at the end of her time had to deal with the Salman Rushdie affair. He published the Satanic Verses and the Ayatollah Khomeini puts a fatwa on him saying he was going to kill him.

This was an act of a head of state who was effectively the head of state, I can't remember if he literally was the head of state, Ayatollah Khomeini telling Muslims that it was a Muslim act to go and kill Salman Rushdie. Mrs. Thatcher had this difficult problem of actually not liking anything that Rushdie had said. He actually calls her Mrs. Torture in the course of the Satanic Verses, so she wasn't a big friend of his, but she knew she had to defend his right to write such a book.

She was being confronted, on the one, both by riots and protests and book burning in England, so that's directly her affair, and by global attempts to come in and assassinate Rushdie because he was ordered to do so by a foreign power. I wonder how you see ... So in the end of the communist era, should we now see Islamism as sort of a power political force as well as an ideological question? What do you think?

Lord Sacks: Charles, I feel very, very strongly about this since I've written the strongest book I've ever written called *Not in God's Name* on this as you've directed at Jews, at Christians and Muslims collectively and individually. I think Anne's point is important, but it's important to understand that it was born as a religious idea. The separation of religion and power.

One of the most radical statements of the Hebrew Bible is the separation of powers between kings, priests, and prophets, which gets taken up by Montesquieu and then by the Federalist papers. A king cannot be a high priest. A high priest can't be a king. So you had separation of power, civil power, from religion. Then along comes Christianity and says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." So you have a principle separation of religion and power, but that is theory.

In practise, whenever a religion is offered power, it can never resist the temptation. The end result is that if you look at history, it takes trauma to force religions to reconsider. The Abrahamic faiths have all gone through this trauma. Judaism went through it in the first century, when within besiege Jerusalem, with the Roman troops outside, the Jews were busy, more busy



killing one another than confronting the enemy outside. As a result of which Judaism became demilitarised, the pacific faith that depoliticized itself and saw peace as the highest value. That happened in the first century.

Christianity, which was born at 15 centuries later, has its own crisis 15 centuries later. In the 16th century, when Europe is torn apart by wars of religion between Catholics and Protestants starting in France, culminating in the 30 Years war, and that is when the Treaty of Westphalia is born in 1648 as an attempt to create countries in which Catholics and Protestants can live together in peace. That is when Christianity learned to separate religion from power.

Today, the same thing is happening in the world of Islam between Sunni and Shia, between radical and moderate, between all sorts of internal things. We forget that the primary victims of Islamist violence to all Muslims. When Muslim thinkers reach the conclusion that the rabbis reached or that Milton, Hobbes, and Locke, and Spinoza reached in the 17th century, that whatever God wants, he doesn't want us killing other the members of our own faith. When that happens, the separation of religion and power will occur within Islam.

At the moment, Islam is going through great turbulence and it's very important for us to feel this. Not to simply condemn it blindly, but to remain strong in our own conviction that as religious people we believe that religion should have influence, but should never ever aspire to power.

Charles Moore: It's very fascinating, isn't it, that nobody would have thought if we'd had this conference in the last years of the Cold War that we'd all be talking about religion in the 21st century as one of the great questions and issues in all of this.

Lord Sacks: Charles, you said it yourself. In 1989, when Francis Fukuyama was announcing the end of history, that was when the fatwa against Salman Rushdie was issued. So it was at that very moment that we should have taken notice.

Charles Moore: And we didn't pay enough attention. The thing we had in the Cold War, and here we should end really, I should just ask for very short remarks from each of the panel. In a way, the Cold War was morally simple, wasn't it? I mean, the majority of people in the Western world, not everybody, I mean not, for example, Jeremy Corbyn, but most people in the Western world thought that the communist system was fundamentally bad and ours was at least all right and in many thought, it was fundamentally good.

And gosh that made that easy for politicians. It wasn't a good situation for the people of Poland and East Germany and things, but it held us together. You're a great expert on this, of course. Do we have a common enemy now, and if we don't, how can we forge unity when unity is so dependent on the



idea of an enemy, unfortunately? Anne, you crack off. You're the historian of the-

Anne Applebaum: Well, I feel there are several common enemies and we've discussed one glancingly today and one a little bit more. One of them is the challenge that comes from religious fanaticism, particularly in the form of Islamic fanaticism. The other is the challenge that comes from antidemocratic ideologies, which promote a very different view of how society should be organised.

I would think that in interfacing both threats right now, they come from Russia. They may, in the future, come from China, but also from religious fanatics. I would think that we would be able to look back, look at what unites us, look at the religious roots of what unites us, but also at the political roots of what unites us, and we would be able to fight back against those two enemies.

I'm not convinced that's going to happen. I think there are too many divided views about who's the real enemy. I often hear Russia placed in opposition to Islam. We should fight one or the other. But I really think that by defending what the fundamental values of our societies are, we can see that these are both challenges. But in the end, the defence is going to be that it's all about fighting enemies. The end is going to be reasserting what we are and remembering what we are and really by doing that, that we'll defeat them both.

Richard C.: I think I'd add to the list of enemies, which I agree a moral torpor and indifference because that is a huge threat. The difference with the Cold War is that I think you characterised it very well, Charles. Now, however, we have a fragmenting more multipolar world. So the challenge is a challenge to be constructive, to be co-evolutionary.

There's an end to hegemonic dreams of being able to impose the same institutions that we have at the end of the Second World War on the whole globe. There's got to be a new accommodation with some of the rising powers. We do miss Mrs. Thatcher, don't we? I mean in this context. It was in this hall actually at a lunch, she suddenly leant over to me and grasped my hand and said, "Don't touch the dark pate, Bishop. It's very fattening." We really need that clarity.

Charles Moore: Jonathan.

Lord Sacks: Well, I am slightly against the need for enemies. The person who intellectually made the case was a guy called Carl Schmitt who was a fascist, and I have a problem with that. I have a problem with anyone who reduces humanity to a war of the children of light against the children of darkness because that always ends in tears.

Our greatest enemy is a simple failure of self-belief, to be true to ourself, to be true to our past and extraordinary historic traditions by which we're



surrounded here. When we own our past, we can give that on together with the gift of identity and self-confidence to our children and generations yet unborn.

We have a wonderful and magnificent country here as does the United States, both of which manage to incorporate, within their national ethos, huge ranges of immigrants and refugee seekers each group of which added something to the total culture. It's a very embracing culture. If you have confidence in who you are, you can face the future and all your potential, not enemies but friends, without fear. Thank you.

Charles Moore:

Ladies and gentlemen, when I was asked to be chairman of this particular panel, I was worried that because it's about what the West stand for, we could just talk about absolutely bloody everything. In fact, that is what we have done. That has been marvellously successful. I think our panel has mastered the capacity to bring so many threads together and see a way through it, and provoke all the questions that need to be asked and to answer, at least, some of them. So will you join me in thanking them very much for that?