

Book Review

Perry Anderson, *The New Old World* (Verso 2009), pp.xvii+561.

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## **OLD SCHOOL**

**(author's cut)**



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On the back cover of this stunning brick of a book, a brace of ringing endorsements from all the major English language press announce a publication of quite stupendous scope: "European pieties go under the knife", cheers one. We hold in our hands another Eurosceptic blockbuster, relishing the inevitable doom of the foolish European project, amidst a bonfire of its idealist vanities. Although this is not Perry Anderson's intention -- he is not so much a Eurosceptic as a despairing radical Euro-intellectual from an older cosmopolitan tradition -- there is not much hope left after reading his assessment of the ideals promoted in the "life and works of the European saints": those liberal founding fathers of the European Union who tried to secure the post-war continent's peace, prosperity and common values.

I once spent a delightful day in Derry with Anderson and his partner visiting the sad and deeply unsettling museum about the Irish Troubles under the town walls of this impoverished, divided town. It was an education, and not only in the history of the six counties. On the long car ride back to Belfast, Anderson broke off his day long reflections with us to consume another tome of major historical scholarship, perhaps this time in Italian or Spanish: a tireless devotee to the polyglot life of politics and the mind. They just don't make academics like this any more. Just as PhDs have become half-finished, wholly instrumental career staging posts, research assessment exercises have completed an almost perfect Stakhanovisation of the European intellectual class. With reductive output measuring methods -- copied across all of Europe after first being pioneered in Britain -- academics everywhere are now subservient to the imperatives of new public management, as well as the passive compliance to the still corrupt game of peer review journal publication. Ambitious interdisciplinary essay writing and the ability to sustain a complex multidimensional argument beyond about ten pages, is dying, if not dead. Atypical in his career, footloose

across continents, Anderson has never had to worry about his citation index or his impact factor. He is "old school" in the good sense: as reliable and perennially cool as a pair of old adidas.

Reading Anderson to review, you end up writing like him, of course. This is no brittle disciplinary study, churning out routine data analysis, which can be read diagonally and trawled for citations or the latest theoretical fad. None of these essays could be published in a "top" academic journal today. Yet enjoying his open platform at *London Review of Books* (LRB), Anderson faces no such constraints. A series of sprawling essays, these over 550 dense packed pages demand close attention and a long measured read.

As a member of a younger generation trained on technicalities rather than historical sweep, my immediate evaluatory impulse is to look for superficialities and inaccuracies. Still, it is a gripping read, and there is something to learn on every page. Anderson reaffirms the blunt relevance of a straightforwardly materialist, empirical Marxism: bristling with sarcasm for lesser minds, admiring fellow old school writers, albeit on the other side -- he gives smart neo-conservatives far more space than they deserve -- and skirting all the fashionable trends of post-colonial and cultural theory-driven Marxisms that have dominated since the 1960s. In only one respect is his analytical toolbox a sign of the times: his often crude conflation of any and every form of contemporary liberalism with the label of "neo-liberalism". Unlike most writers, though, who indulge in this form of denouncement of the form of modern liberal democracy we have inherited, Anderson has no time for the dominant post-positivist mood of the illiterate anglo-american left, the "critical theorists" who mistranslated and mangled Barthes, Bourdieu, Foucault or Deleuze. His own approach is one grounded in power politics, human betrayals and the winding course of liberal illusions, as worthy ideals intersect with historical structures, only to be perverted and upturned.

Anderson is also in another class altogether to prominent career Marxists -- like Erik Swyngedouw or Michael Burawoy -- who use their platform as leading disciplinary academics for preaching revolution on a simulacrum of the barricades. Anderson is more of the despairing variety, somewhat like Orwell's donkey Benjamin in *Animal Farm*: the old school cynic who knows it is all going to go horribly wrong whatever the hopes and dreams. Here, every chapter finishes with an eerily similar vagueness, littered with portentous metaphors peering into a murky future. Whatever the wraith like shape, it is certainly no revolution. Anderson is exempted from ever having to dirty his hands in politics, as are all theoretical Marxists. But surely there is a place for his point of view, steeped in books, poring over newspapers, locked in the library. Liberals will rightly complain this absolves him from the real meat of politics. When engaged in the business of effective governance or cost-benefit jurisdiction, liberalism in practice has to face up to far more intellectual compromise; the tragic pathos of trying to rule for good in spite of everything. Much of the history of the European Union might be described thus. The institutional edifice of the EU, certainly a castle in the air much of time, is a clear, fat and easy target. Nevertheless, even for EU experts, *The New Old World* is an essential provocation, as well as a page-

turning narrative: something which immediately distinguishes it, as Anderson rightly suggests, from 99% of the immensely dull technical literature about the European Union produced by mainstream scholars.

Part one is a trawl through that literature: a subfield mostly defined by the role EU scholars play as interpreters and underwriters of the European project, chasing the bus even as it goes nowhere. In some senses, these works are too easy a target for scorn, as there has never been much of theoretical interest in a literature that derives all its cues from more powerful arenas of political science. It should not necessarily be that way, since the EU has been an immense and unique natural experiment in post-national governance and (arguably) transnational society building. But there has always been something terribly clunky about its earnest debates centred on neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, the implementation of positive and negative integration, or the challenge of social constructivism. Surely only scholars with little imagination would be long detained by this sub-field?

Anderson's lode star is the late Alan Milward, the cantankerous English historian, whose back garden backed on to Tony Blair's in Islington (I learned this over sushi in L.A. once with Milward himself), and who stood, intellectual head and shoulders, over the EU studies field for decades. The admiration is well placed, and the debt obvious, although Anderson admits he is not truly Milwardian. This is perhaps an honest acknowledgement of a certain thinness in his wholly secondary historical sourcing, so unlike the archives-based obsessive thoroughness of the Milward school. Anderson's apparent lack of contact with more recent specialist historical studies on the EU is surprising, a clear weakness in his historical outline of the EU's origins. He rehearses old and inaccurate tropes that have long been refuted: for example, about how the early EU was little more than a carve up between French and German domestic interests. There is a generation of neo-Milwardian scholars, who took up the master's tools, only to seriously challenge his too reductive, too pessimistic, too nation-centred theory (for example, Wolfram Kaiser, Ann-Christina Knudsen, Morten Rasmussen). As it is, Anderson's shelf of key reading on the EU is more stocked with works familiar to the chattering classes -- the kind of sweeping social science that occasionally gets reviewed in LRB or TLS (*Times Literary Supplement*) -- rather than the more specialised works driving the literature that never do. Still, the chapter on "Theories" is a bracing book review of the best of the most visible recent contributions.

Anderson constructs his reading of these works as a quite brilliant survey of the varieties of contemporary liberal thought. The central contrast is between works by Giandomenico Majone (regulative market), John Gillingham (pure market), Barry Eichengreen (social market) and Andrew Moravcsik (pluralist market). It is correct in its portrait of the EU as essentially a market building project. Yet what kind of balance of state and market is being evinced? Only Gillingham's extreme position can be identified as "neo-liberal". Outside of these works Anderson is tempted by the Toquevillian slogans of Larry Siedentop -- a piece of high table Oxbridge blather which ends with a plea for European liberalism to embrace its Christian religious origins -- as well as offering nods to sophisticated

specialists in the shape of sceptical lawyer, Joseph Weiler, Renaud Dehousse, a more idealist lawyer, and (later in the book) the political systems based vision of Stefano Bartolini. Anderson engages in the usual Moravcsik bashing (Moravcsik's career was built on his citation inducing provocations), but in underlining how the EU's bottom line is indeed about business, and that short of democratic reform, it has perhaps reached a certain equilibrium in the post enlargement era, Anderson in fact confirms Moravcsik's more recently expressed readings of the EU today: that the static EU after Lisbon Treaty is "as good as it gets". Moravcsik is a canny synthesiser: his work in many senses a combination of the ideas of the best historian of the EU (Milward) and its best theorist (Majone).

Anderson goes a step further, though, by arguing, with the Amsterdam school of international relations, that the EU is basically a crude neo-liberal project in the service of transnational capital, closer to Hayek than Monnet. This ignores all the redistributive and market tempering features of the EU's legal and regulatory project. Certainly, Anderson is right that the EU is a top down, imperious, Weberian bureaucracy, allergic to the popular vote. But where we need to know more about this as a stable structure for more than fifty years is from sociologists: those who might be capable of studying what lies underneath the politics and the institutional edifice, the social foundations of the iceberg we see moving in Brussels. On this, Anderson turns to Neil Fligstein's heroic synthesis of available data about European society and the structures of its political sociology (see my review in AES XLIX, 3, 2008), as well as giving space to the ungrounded normative idealism of Jürgen Habermas. Again, though, Anderson's reading list is thin here. He mocks both of these sociological offerings, but the book contains no further trace of the by now quite extensive -- and genuinely grounded -- sociology of European Union, by older and younger writers alike (see the survey in [Favell and Guiraudon 2011](#)). In the end, EU studies is far too technical perhaps, of little interest to anyone not an EU geek. But therein lies the problem with Anderson's knowledge of this field. His claim that almost all significant works about the EU are American is patently not true. The field has been substantially driven by German scholars -- Fritz Scharpf, Wolfgang Streeck, Wolfgang Wessels, Beate Kohler-Koch, Adrienne Héretier (Swiss born, Germany based), Thomas Risse, to name a few -- and where would the field be without the Euro-enthusiast British? Anderson would have done well to at least acknowledge the Wallaces (Helen and William; Helen Wallace was an early conspirator with Milward at Manchester), Jeremy Richardson, William Paterson, Gary Marks, or indeed young guns like Simon Hix and Ben Rosamond -- before concluding thus.

In part two of the book, Anderson moves into more comfortable home territory: the old Europa of grand national traditions, the self-sustaining and largely bounded political and intellectual systems of France, Germany and Italy, as he portrays them. One feels that Anderson, like nearly all his colleagues in the American historical profession, is happier with a Europe clearly divided up into stable great powers, languages and cultures, to be compared not synthesised. This is methodological nationalism, of course; in Anderson, intellectuals are even largely determined by their national origins -- not far from a Churchillian view of the "genius of nations". That, perhaps, is a little bit too old school as a view of Europe. I for one would agree that Europe is still on balance a Europe of nation

state societies, and that any post-national society in the making is but an idealist sketch atop an artificial infrastructure. Yet much of which is specific about European nations is a rearguard action against the bigger flows of globalisation, so both national and post-national viewpoints need to be kept in view. Anderson in fact argues for this in the introduction to the book -- he is, for sure, impeccably cosmopolitan -- but it is not substantiated in his largely nation-centred readings of the big nation states.

Still, these long and winding LRB texts at the heart of the book are a wonderful read. For instance, France parts one and two, the narrative of how the legacy of the 60s Marxist and (post-) structuralist radicals -- especially those four famous intellectuals on the grass (Foucault, Lacan, Lévi-Strauss and Barthes) -- was overcome by a generation of centrist liberals, led by François Furet, who effected a heist of the revolutionary tradition in service of the normalisation of French politics, during the consensual politics of the Mitterand era. As the argument builds, alongside hilarious put downs of the rise of risible "new" public intellectuals like Bernard Henri-Lévi, we come to understand the dangers latent in Pierre Nora's related cultural nationalism, as well as the mediocrity of Furet's followers, such as Pierre Rosanvallon. Only perhaps the breakaway Bourdieusian, Luc Boltanski, emerges unscathed as a French intellectual still able to compete in the world class, a decline of French intelligentsia -- in the 1960s and 70s the most powerful hot bed of ideas in the world -- as dramatic as it is sad. Furet managed to achieve his goals, falling dead on the tennis court, but not before his liberal *république du centre* had cemented its hold on left-right politics and intellectual life. The chapters on France are perhaps even surpassed in the account of the intermeshed political and intellectual currents of the post-war Federal Republic; which among many other things explains why Habermas is not as important as he is thought to be internationally, and how the most interesting inheritor of 1968 radicalism has been the unorthodox conservative nationalist editor of *Merkur*, Karl-Heinz Bohrer.

With unabashed relish and not a little panache, the excitement of this history of ideas and intellect in the three countries is matched by the vituperative scorn with which Anderson charts the scandalous destiny of social democracy in power in the 2000s; the cowering to the neo-liberal market and geo-political realpolitik, as he portrays it, which sees actual existing social democracy ending its life with a whimper in the hands of manipulative scoundrels such as Blair, Schroeder, and D'Alema. It should be noted somewhere in this inexhaustibly rich portrait of the hybridisation of liberal/social democratic forms in three very different countries, that very little in any of them can be easily described as "neo-liberalism" -- even Sarkozy or Blair did not put in place pure neo-liberal ideas. Since the EU is widely regarded as more progressive than any of its constituent national members, it must also lay doubt on Anderson's hard left caricature of the EU. What else might have been possible, given the collapse of a traditional working class industrial politics everywhere except, debatably, Germany? The narrative arc of each chapter is familiar, from post 1960s hope, via left-right conflict, to despair, betrayal and cynicism, predictably with the disaster zone of Italy the bleakest path of all.

Anderson defends the attention lavished on the big three, primarily by admitting limits to his human capacity to cover more; so other cases, such as Spain or Netherlands, which would have been just as interesting, are left aside. That does not defuse, though, what might be thought as the most serious omission of the book: Anderson's puzzling silence about contemporary Britain. Now, for sure, as a fellow disaffected rootless expat, I can share Anderson's bitter gut reaction that post-Thatcher Britain -- with its uncivilised everyday quality of life, its deplorably shallow media, its tacky national culture -- is "of little moment"; but on reflection we are both, surely, wrong. While Paris declined, Berlin struggled, and Rome dropped off the map, London rose during the 1990s and 2000s, to become unambiguously the true capital of Europe, a rise to centrality and power, crowned by the fevered preparation for a ripping and glorious Union Jack strewn Olympics, even as its multi-ethnic underclass "chavs" (the contemporary phrase of choice for Orwell's "proles") were rioting on the streets of every major city in the land. This was the era of that odd couple, Blair and Brown, whose teeth gritted pact in an Islington restaurant upon the death of John Smith, before the 1997 elections, dictated the course of British history for the next 13 years.

Intellectually speaking, the epithet "of little moment" may well be right. Regarding the human sciences, and leaving aside history for which Anderson reels off a long list of distinguished names, the roll call of Great British intellectual life of this period is indeed rather paltry. Political science in Britain is in helpless thrall to the American model; sociology and anthropology largely eclipsed by the flimsy theorisation and radical chic of cultural and media studies; human geography a bastion of vulgar Marxism. The only exceptions to this general picture of human sciences, adrift from society, and empty of empirical content, are the resentful positivists of Nuffield College, whose dogged adherence to grinding out comparative stratification research and rational choice models, is matched by a blind contempt for anybody that does not share their narrow methodological beliefs or who critiques its master thinker, John Goldthorpe. Like the dominant sociology school in France -- Bourdieu's -- in theory equally enamoured of equality -- the main function of these sociological sects seems to be solely to try to reproduce themselves within the bastion of the elite schools, placing clones of the master in all possible places of power in the academy. The much vaunted milieux of the academic co-op, Verso, and Anthony Giddens and co.'s Polity, as well as the intellectual journals TLS and LRB, are not much better: old boy networks publishing each other to diminishing intellectual returns. The irrelevance of all to British political life was confirmed by the weak exception of Giddens' ideas about the third way, a thin ornamental icing on the Blair-Brown project.

The blunt truth was, Labour did not need organic intellectuals. Brown's first act was to release the Bank of England from government control to set its own interest rates and hence a global agenda for the City; conveniently "off-shore", yet embedded in Europe -- on some measures, notably openness of the labour market, more than any other member state -- British antipathy to Europe was a deceptive pose; free European factors of mobility did the rest. What came next in the era of financial capitalism, was the triumph of the financial, media and services capital of Europe, equidistant from the Americas and Asia. A generation

of European youth from Western Europe -- the cream of the continent -- were attracted in droves; followed by the best skilled workforce on offer (Eastern Europe), as Britain flung open its labour markets door after enlargement in 2004. The dour Brown ("not Flash just Gordon") may eventually get more credit for the inflation of British economic power in this period; he might even get some credit for brokering the deal that saved global financial capitalism. It was rare in Europe for a competent lawyer-economist -- a genuine old school liberal in the Scottish enlightenment tradition -- to wield power.

Blair, meanwhile, the ever-smiling public face of New Labour, undoubtedly repositioned the UK internationally with success, hobnobbing with European leaders (barbeques with the Berlusconi and Aznars) and leaping up to serve successive American masters, an even more effective lap dog than any Thatcher administration. At home, he piloted, through cajolement and smarm, a kind of public sector management revolution (Australian in origin), in which benchmarking, performance related incentives, market efficiency criteria, and reductive criteria of competitiveness would henceforth reign over large swathes of civil society and the public sphere. Suitably packaged and marketed, Britain could now boast of a string of "world class" universities, even though most were falling apart physically, academics did all their own secretarial work, and international students would find that many of the features promised in the brochure were nothing more than a fancy home page.

Blair certainly had more front than the Sainsbury's family that financed the party, and even improved on Berlusconi in the suave media politician stakes. Surely the greatest achievement of this dyed-in-the-wool Tory, who selected Labour while at Oxford as a calculation it would be more likely to propel him to power, was his effective destruction of what was left of egalitarian comprehensive state education in Britain, in favour of religious based opt outs and parental choice. The last Labour government for another generation even managed to deliver parliamentary rule back to the upper classes into which Blair was born. Old school Marxist conspiracy theories might well be evoked to explain just how this happened, a political restoration that even allowed the chinless wonders in the Conservative Party to turn the clock back to the halcyon days of upper class rule, before the grocer's daughter from Grantham shook everything up. Brown's last desperate days gave way to a slickly suited "Dave" Cameron, a charming Eton old boy, who would heave his way to work on cycle, with a black car entourage behind, and a crate of champagne in the boot. Part of this ironic outcome was also the rise of the liberals, out of oblivion to cabinet power, led by Britain's first ever Eurostar politician: ex-Euro MP "Nick" Clegg, Cameron's vice prime minister and subordinate tennis partner. Surely this spectacular, indeed, grotesque story -- the biggest and most blatant betrayal of social democracy that could be found anywhere in Europe -- should have had a place in this book. Unfortunately, Anderson implicitly endorses that most lazy, and farcical commonplace amongst scholars on both side of the Channel -- cemented by "varieties of capitalism" simplicities in the social sciences -- that Britain is not a European society. Further to the west, and more distinct culturally, Ireland, of course, is; although the author's place of birth is also

missing from the big picture, apart from a frequent mention of the way the EU has steamrollered over its occasionally anti-EU referenda petulance.

In ignoring Britain and Ireland, another lacuna in Anderson's theoretical machinery is revealed. Culture, as an autonomous driver of society, is given virtually no place at all as his political economy drives history forward. This would be impossible to do if culture in England, Scotland and Ireland was given its due place as a motor at the heart of these societies' development over the last few decades. Popular culture is entirely absent from Anderson's vision of Europe; the continent looks a quite different place when viewed through the eyes of an historian such as Arthur Marwick, for example, both in terms of its internal dynamics and its international relations. In this view, Milton Friedman or Madeleine Albright might well be less important figures for recent European history than Madonna or Jeff Koons. A narrative of Britain after the 1980s, an era of glory for British popular culture worldwide, would need to focus on the contributions to the national story of Johnnie Rotten, Jamie Oliver, Damien Hirst, or even the truly glorious Jarvis Cocker, the smart-ass rock poet of the "common people" who sabotaged Michael Jackson's last live performance on TV in the UK. Certainly these "organic" cultural figures are much more significant than Anderson's high table sparring partners such as Giddens or Timothy Garton Ash.

Occasionally, late in a chapter, he gestures to movies, of the art house variety, and occasionally to what is left of the high brow novel -- an oxymoron in Britain, certainly, given that its most representative novelists would probably be Nick Hornby, Tony Parsons, David Peace and David Nicholls. And when he ventures an opinion, he more than once he gets the judgement call wrong: Nanni Moretti -- whose films, since he stopped making boring films about Italian communism, have been an exquisite and painful dissection of the Italian middle classes -- is trivialised as "winsome"; Michel Houellebecq -- whose astonishing Darwinian sci-fi has been the most chilling guide to the *fin de siècle* European (male) condition -- is rubbished as "doggerel". Orhan Pamuk, meanwhile -- who is in fact despised and hated by the Turkish left -- is given approval. One other blindspot, that is so blatant it barely needs commenting, is the absolute absense -- a crudely caricatured chancellor Angela Merkel being the only exception -- of important women in Anderson's world view.

The fact that Pamuk is about the only artistic figure from Turkey mentioned in the imperious survey of this nation that rounds off the main chapters, also points to the other, perhaps most serious, fault of the book. By far the least satisfactory part of *The New Old World* is Anderson's attack on the Eastern Question. The writing here, notably in comparison to the minutely detailed frieze of the West European chapters, reveals a lack of in-depth personal resources which means that the insider account of the micro-political intersection of ideas, intellect and power, give way to a much more telegraphed and old fashioned sweep of long distance grand narrative history: a story of titan politicians, faceless victims, and the unfolding of the ironies of history. Anderson of course is right to pose the Eastern Question as the key issue towards which the book moves. It is not only the central question in debates about the "the idea of Europe", with its riddle about how to draw a line on its Eastern borders; the next to closing chapter on



"Antecedents" is a masterful survey of the pre-Milwardian history of ideas, a gift for teaching on this topic. But it is also frankly hard to see a viable future for an EU that does not engage fully with Turkey as the next crucial potential member of the Union.

As it is, Anderson's basic position comes as a surprise. Intransigently, he offers a no holds barred intellectual defence essentially of what has been the Nicolas Sarkozy position: that every school child knows Turkey is not a part of Europe, its geographical faultline emphasised even more by its serial failings in matters of democracy and human rights (however unlikely these concepts are for a Marxist to insist upon). Central to the argument, is Anderson's rejection of the "bien pensant" cant of nearly all EU politicians and bureaucrats, progressive voices in the media (not as common as he makes out), as well as pragmatic and historical voices. He pours scorn on historian colleagues such as Mark Mazower, Timothy Garton Ash and Norman Stone, stating bluntly that what they call Turkey's "inevitable" and "desirable" membership needs to be indefinitely postponed. It is, in short, a curiously colonialist reading of a defective non-European upstart: portraying Erdoğan's Turkey as little different to al-Assad's Syria or Mubarak's Egypt.

Step one in his case is the Cyprus question. Here, he largely lays the historical blame on the British and the Americans, rather than Turkey's *realpolitik* responding to the great powers' signals. He repeatedly batters a point that the Turkish presence in Cyprus is a form of ethnic cleansing akin to Israeli occupation of the West Bank; yet there is little to warrant this conclusion in a narrative that balances Turkish opportunism with Greek opponents every bit as violent and disreputable in their manoeuvring over the island. The argument extols a right of self-determination of the Greek majority, over the "Turkish" solution arrived at by negotiation with the great powers, when the combined forces of EU and UN diplomacy tried to unify the island in the 2000s using diplomatic balancing mechanisms sensitive to both communities. What we never receive is an answer as to why the EU could have politically made the blunder of not making future accession of Cyprus conditional on ratification by both sides, thus allowing the radical rump of Cypriot Greek nationalists an indefinite veto on any future membership of Turkey in the EU; although he does recount how this sorry state of affairs came about. The Cypriot condition is a tragedy, but it is still difficult not to see it as a minor priority alongside the much more significant business the EU has with the over 70 million citizens living in the large nation state a few hundred miles to the north.

There is much to admire in the flowing account of Turkish modern history in the next, surely epic, chapter. Turkey, it seems, requires analysis that takes us back to its 19th century roots, in contrast to the contemporaneous narratives of the West European chapters. Anderson acknowledges particular help from a former UCLA graduate, Zeynep Türkyılmaz, one of the many young highly educated, often radical and disaffected scholars, who left Turkey to pursue academic careers in Europe or the US. One can always count on this generation of articulate critics to offer witheringly negative portraits of the politics of their home country. Yet many of these once exiled populations also went home during

the liberalisation of the 1990s and 2000s, such that as well as its stunning growth dynamics (both demographic and economic), the liberal environment and civil society of, particularly, Istanbul, is startlingly alive, culturally rich, and hugely contestatory. All of this has flourished under the AKP, but we do not get a sense of this: the European prize, in particular, has encouraged all kinds of feminist and human rights based activism that is far from silenced. So Anderson mentions a couple of the brave historians such as Taner Akçam and Çağlar Keyder leading the debates on the Armenian and Kurdish issue, but not many others across the liberal-progressive spectrum in Turkey who are well alive to these issues but also understand their ambivalencies. There is no mention either of foreign minister/ideologue Ahmet Davutoğlu or some of the more intriguing intellectual dimensions of the AKP's program.

Erdoğan's intentions are much feared and he is hated by the secular left, but neither he nor the equally devote President Gül slips easily into the Islamist stereotype, even as their bristling machismo clearly owes something to Atatürk. As it is, Anderson's assessment of their rule is subjugated entirely to the extreme position he takes on the Armenian question: not much different to the zombie politics of Sarkozy or the Armenian lobby in the US, which holds that categorically no business can be done with the genocide-denying mass murderers still effectively in power in Ankara. Yet the Armenian question and how to recognise these events is openly debated and anguished over in Turkey -- it animates civil society, troubles politicians -- and the progressive cause is not helped in the slightest by sanctimonious and hypocritical legislators in France and the US: two nation states with plenty of their own corpses stashed in the cupboard. The history of the Armenians cannot be changed, but the Kurdish question is very much alive, and by far the more important and urgent issue in Turkey today. Times have moved on: a forcibly invisible assimilated and excluded population, as they were, have moved slowly into becoming an ethnically recognised but socially underclass migrant worker class fuelling the Turkish dream. Anderson also fails to note how the Kurdish situation has improved substantially under the AKP, which draw many of its votes from Kurdish populations nationwide. At one point in the chapter, Anderson berates a series of leading American scholars of Turkey, whose engagements and personal commitments in the country, he claims, stay their hand from the open, harsh criticism he advocates. But perhaps Anderson reveals his own limitations here. He mentions the unfailing courtesy of ordinary Turks -- suggesting he has visited the country -- but at no point do we sense an intimate knowledge or much familiarity with the everyday life of the place. Could it be that these other scholars simply know more, and more accurately, than he does?

Anderson's view on Turkey is the only time in *The New Old World* when he aligns himself with the dominant mainstream view in Europe. Despite his claim that the tolerant, indulgent view of the EU on Turkey is the unquestioned consensus in intelligent European politics, in fact we would be hard pressed to find many politicians willing to press the case of Turkish accession, and certainly no democratic populace. The case against Turkey is, then, a kind of tabloid history that sits uneasily alongside his unswerving attack on mainstream complacencies elsewhere. In the end, it is an error heavily outweighed by the virtues of the rest

of the book. We must also allow that intelligent opinion differs on Turkey, as it does generally on the question of Islam in Europe. Is a mutually destructive conflict of civilisations inevitable, or can an enlightened compromise be found between traditions integral to the continent? We will have to agree to differ.

No matter. By the close of the final summarising chapter -- which re-evokes the Turkish question and Anderson's sarcastic vision of Joschka Fischer and Daniel Cohn-Bendit taking the TGV from Paris to dine on the shores of the Bosphorus while Turkish soldiers warily eye potential terrorists in a remote Anatolian village -- there is a satisfying sense of a remarkable panorama having been traced, even if it is so thoroughly cast in a relentless, mordant pessimism. Let us rightly appreciate Perry Anderson; and let us also hope that the Stakhanovites will not triumph, so that there will always be room for such style and substance in the academe.