

POPULARIZING THE IDEA OF LIBERTY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

A CONVERSATION ABOUT RHETORICAL CLUBS, METAPHORS AND IDEAS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Abstract:

In this conversation Clemens Schneider and Stefan Kolev share their experience as directors of two political economy think-tanks: they talk about the social and institutional context of their field of work, about the activities their organizations engage in and about the goals they want to achieve. They discuss the rhetorical dimensions of what they do – how the communities they strive to build are like “rhetorical clubs” which share a common language, how they approach their audiences, taking into account their specificities, the metaphors they use or struggle against, the requirement, which both of them adhere to, to be honest and clear about one’s own values and norms when engaging into a dialogue. Finally, they touch on the issue of the importance of rhetorical bridges across ideological divides in today’s atmosphere of debate characterized often by radicalization and intellectual intolerance.

Key words: *rhetoric of science, liberalism, metaphors*

Clemens Schneider is the founder and program director of Prometheus – Das Freiheitsinstitut in Berlin. Catholic theologian by education, he is a public intellectual with a broad range of media appearances in recent years. In addition, he is the founder of Agora Summer Academy, a week-long annual meeting for students on key issues in the domains of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. He is a founding member of the NOUS Network for Constitutional Economics and Social Philosophy, Freiburg.

Prof. Dr. Stefan Kolev is the academic director of the Ludwig Erhard Forum for Economy and Society in Berlin and a professor of political economy at the University of Applied Sciences in Zwickau, Germany. Economist by education, he focuses his media appearances on the revitalization of the Social Market Economy in Germany and beyond. He is a member of the Mont Pèlerin Society and a founding member of the NOUS Network for Constitutional Economics and Social Philosophy, Freiburg.

Rossen Stoyanov is a researcher at the Department of Rhetoric at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Philosopher by education, his research interests are in the field of philosophy of science, the problem of scientific explanation and rhetoric of science.

Rossen Stoyanov: Dear friends and colleagues, our discussion can now begin and I hope it will be an interesting and informative talk about the activities of our guests as popularizers of scientific ideas in the field of political economy. The discussion is being

recorded and it is going to be published in our online academic journal *Rhetorica Online* of the Department of Rhetoric at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

RS: Can you tell me a bit more about your organizations, what kind of organizations are these and why you have chosen this activity? I am also curious whether this kind of organizations is something common for the public landscape in Germany, whether such initiatives are popular in Germany?

Clemens Schneider: The work we are doing at Prometheus is to help to form a certain ideological, political movement. There are always actors who are addressing specific policy issues such as environmental policy, tax policy, etc., and so these actors focus on actual politics and they are indeed important because they play role in shaping day-to-day politics. However, we, at Prometheus are trying to focus on a very different aspect of politics which is the long-run development, the trends where one invests in for a long time in order to gain some major ground in the future – here, in Germany we can see this with the Green movement, specifically the anti-nuclear movement, where for a period of over 10-20-30 years activists have been preparing the public to be more contrarian towards nuclear power. Thus, in contrast to many other European countries where nuclear power is welcomed and being used, where new powerplants are being built, in Germany, the support for nuclear power in the whole society has been going back for decades and we believe this is because of the work of these anti-nuclear movement, a work which has been going into the society for some time. In fact, they don’t address the political leaders but people who shape opinions, opinion-makers such as journalists, scientists, academics, teachers, this kind of people whose job in the society is to inform society with opinions, to provide people with a mindset, so to speak. And so this is our “role model”, not content-wise of course, but in terms of the adopted strategy, a long-term one – in the same way at Prometheus we would like to help to shape a more liberally minded, more individualistic, classical liberal movement in Germany, so that more people put more trust in the individual instead in the state. We want to try to empower people in taking charge of their own lives and we do this by actually addressing these opinion-leaders, specifically the opinion-leaders of tomorrow. That is why we are not so much focused on people at the age of 50 or 60 now, but rather approach with our ideas and values people who are at the age between 15 and 30 and who, in fact, will shape the future of Germany’s public opinion. And what we do is to try to convince them, we try to make our ideas accessible to them, make them sympathetic, so that they can actually relate to these ideas and see the beneficial outcomes of our ideas. We try to provide them with a mindset, but also with networks by encountering other people who share these ideas. Of course this is a bet – because the time horizon we try to focus on is a 20-30-years one and you never know whether this investment will pay out. But, at least as of now, we are confident that we can achieve something.

Prof. Dr. Stefan Kolev: Clemens has been in the business of think-tanking for much longer than I have, so let me describe what we at the Ludwig Erhard Forum have tried

to do in the first months of our existence. Prometheus is a think-tank which is very much educational, it focuses on young people, it focuses on the very long run, so that if those young people in 10-20 years from now are the opinion-leaders of tomorrow, they would have the ideas about which liberalism or economics or both of them care about. My institution is fairly new - our mother institution, the Ludwig Erhard Foundation was founded already in 1967 in Bonn by former Minister of the Economy and Chancellor Ludwig Erhard - but the Ludwig Erhard Forum in Berlin of which I am the director, is only 9-months old. We are somewhat different from what Clemens described. While not directly intervening in each and every policy debate, I do believe that we should do two things which are not so long-term-oriented as Prometheus. First, we try to become a voice in the public debates, in those debates about the crazy times we live in, a voice about how political economy with its history, but also with its current toolkit, can be of help in the disorientation of our times. And how the disorderly, even chaotic times, as some people see the state of affairs in Western democracies can profit from a tradition of liberal political economy in which Clemens and I are interested in – and can do so today. While not focusing on each and every subsidy which some ministry is going to give to somebody, we hope to inform the public debate about how, for example, the green transition can be done through the pricing mechanism, how this transition can be handled without the micromanagement of which some politicians dream. Second, we try to be a platform for debates. If you think about the political spectrum, it is obvious that in the recent years the center has become pretty much more narrow and embattled by both the left and the right and, if we consider it in terms of rhetoric, I think it can be said that the center has lost a large part of its rhetorical skills to debate in a civilized and yet polemic manner the problems of our times. And that is why we try to organize various debates between people who are interested in the ideas we stand for - they don't have to like those ideas - and in that way we hope to enable the political center, the center-left and the center-right alike, to regain their language in talking about the pressing problems which people out there care about, and offer solutions which can again solidify Western democracies. So, to put it briefly, on the one hand we try to be a voice, on the other hand, a platform, not as long-term oriented as Clemens described, but also not one which intervenes on a daily basis. We also aspire – that is why we call ourselves an academic think-tank – to creatively continue that tradition of liberal political economy around Ordoliberalism and the Social Market Economy by publishing and by organizing conferences. So, it is about applying this tradition to our times, but also about thinking what of this tradition is still valid, and what has to be further developed so that it fits our times.

RS: I see, if I understand it right, the audiences of your two think-tanks are different ones?

SK: Yes, I would say so. While Clemens emphasized their focus on young people, I am happy people at our age or older join our events, people who are going to be active in

society in the next 20 years and more. And certainly, when it comes to the media, our two organizations try to address the same newspapers and podcasts, but perhaps at the Ludwig-Erhard Forum we do it in a slightly different way and the events we are doing are slightly different – perhaps Clemens can say something more about that. Our events may be a little bit more formal, whereas Prometheus is amazing in organizing events where people really meet and interact in very informal, but very strong way. Clemens, perhaps you can expand on that...

CS: I think it is a very nice description already. I think one very important point about building a movement is the emotional part of it, the “emotional intelligence” part, and this is something, which, at least here in Germany, many liberals have been neglecting for decades, I would say, maybe even for a century – how important it is to trust each other, to understand each other, to be able to empathize with each other, and that you can build networks that hold really strong despite all odds. Networks that are so strong and so resilient that you can actually rely on them for a long time. And people feel commitment, proper commitment to the cause, not just, sort of, conveniently joining for a while. And I think this is very important and so that’s why we focus a lot on these ways of connecting among people. It is not necessary that these interactions are informed by specific topics, that is, that we meet only because we all agree on this or that particular policy issue. Rather, we meet because we are certain kind of people with a certain kind of mindset and we want to form strong and lasting alliances.

RS: It sounds to me that what you do is to create with your rhetoric and your activities a community, you create networks and community of like-minded people?

CS: Community is maybe a better word than network, because “network” usually has an instrumental connotation of trying to use these contacts, whereas a community has something more of a value of itself, and that is what we are trying to build, yes.

SK: Talking about rhetoric and language, I would like to point to an interesting metaphor, the metaphor of the club. If you think of something very inclusive, as opposed to many clubs which are exclusive, something where people basically share in some code of conduct or pursue together some joint interest, I think, that is what those communities aspire to be. So, what happens is that people subscribe to them, contribute to them, both verbally and perhaps also financially, it is really a club, something like a rhetorical club. I think the language which is spoken at these events is basically the code, and people need the chiffre in order to participate in these clubs. This language is easy to learn, it is not exclusive, but certainly when joining such a rhetorical club a newcomer may feel in the very beginning a little awkward. But after a short time, after deciphering the language, after getting to know the jokes of such a club, one starts to belong to it, and in the next step would ideally start to contribute to it, both by participating and by trying to establish a financial infrastructure.

RS: In general, are such kind of initiatives common in German public life?

SK: In the domain we are talking about, I would answer with a very brief “no”, but maybe Clemens can expand on it.

CS: I am not sure I would go with a “no” – it really depends on the section of society where you are. I believe that specifically in the ideological area where Stefan and me are treading, that’s not common – we have a lot of very ancient institutions that work according to a very ancient code of conduct which was invented in the 1950s in Germany, in postwar Germany and it really hasn’t changed a lot since then. So, there is not very much dynamism, I think in the ideological camp in which we broadly belong to, but there are other ideological regions where this sort of communication and working together is much more common. On the left I believe there a lot of people who have adopted this way of addressing the society, also, of course, the ecological movement, as I explained it before, and I would also say that increasingly the right wing, like the nationalist and very conservative reactionary forces in the country are getting a little bit better in this, they understand how this works. We have institutions like the Ludwig Erhard Forum and Prometheus that work in sort of a similar way as this is done in other ideological camps, but not so much in our own.

SK: I agree to what Clemens said and let me just add something – since the left has been so strong and creative in creating such rhetorical clubs, I found it important and intriguing in the past months to try to build bridges to them, here, in Berlin. And, interestingly enough, this turned out to be surprisingly easy - in previous times I think it might have been much more difficult, but since everybody agrees that we live in crazy times, the readiness to listen to somebody else’s content and rhetoric seems to have increased. So I would like to give an example how such a bridge can look like rhetorically: in April I was at a meeting of a center-left think-tank of which I am now in the academic board and it was a very intense discussion. I was in a room full of left-leaning public servants and intellectuals and I was the person “from the other side”. So I tried something which worked out surprisingly well. It may be an example for how you can get into what appears to be an alien rhetorical club. This wonderful institution is called “The Progressive Center”, and so when I started out, I said: “Look, in a way we are all progressives, none of us here is a conservative or a reactionary, that is, we don’t want to stop the world from changing. So progress is something which all of us care about. However, the difference might be that most of you in the room seem to have identified or believe to have identified *the* progress, whereas people like myself would say that since we don’t know *the* progress, we don’t know where the world is moving to in singular, we talk about *progresses* in plural, because we believe that the goal of liberal institutions like the Ludwig Erhard Forum is to enable an environment in which people progress themselves, individually, in their own directions. This can be an individual, it can be a group, it can be a large part of civil society, but it is a multi-dimensional progress path where each and everyone is walking in his or her direction, and those multi-dimensional *progresses* in plural is what liberals (and, by the way, also economists) care about.” And so this proved to

be an interesting bridge because people at the meeting said: “Ok, that’s interesting, the guy attempts to talk to us in our language, so perhaps we should listen to what he has to say”. After two hours of very hot debate it worked out pretty well. So I think it is fundamental to open up, at least to show some hermeneutic benevolence, to show that you believe that the other’s language is not toxic, that you recognize that both aim for the good of society. Only then we can start disagreeing about the means how this shared aim can be achieved, and a lot of this discussion about means has to do with rhetoric.

RS: Now, since you mentioned aims and means for these aims to be achieved, I would like to discuss an aspect of political economy, your science - it is a social science and as we know, the social sciences not only describe reality, but also talk about certain aims that are considered valuable and what should be done in order these aims to be realized.

SK: It is true that for the social scientists in general, and for the economists in particular, talking about the positive *and* the normative is difficult. Thus, many colleagues would always say: “No, no, no, we should stick to the positive, to the descriptive, and should leave the prescriptive, the normative, to the politician, to the citizen, depending on which notion of democracy you actually have”. But personally, I think this is fundamentally wrong. I always find it helpful whenever I talk to people in the streets, which I have been doing as a member of the liberal party in Germany since 2004, or to people through some media, to openly say “Well, I am a liberal”. And thus to declare that in my ranking of values or norms, liberty is the most important one - not the only one, but the most important one, I certainly have an understanding of justice, of security. So all I have to tell you about political economy, about the “good” order which I would like to suggest, has to do with those norms whose personal ranking I’ve made explicit beforehand. Here is a rhetorical twist which I use quite often: “You know, seen from my perspective, from the perspective of the liberal political economy, we live in the best world that has ever existed, it is not the best world imaginable, right, it is not the best of all possible worlds, but it is the best of all historical worlds.” Of course for a such a statement to be legitimate, one must have first explained what the normative basis for such a judgment is. But I find it fundamentally important that we explain those value judgments clearly and say: “If you understand my normative position, then such a statement, a historical statement, can make you think, can make you consider our situation today seriously”. Because then, perhaps we start talking that preserving this world, which we can destroy at any moment, is a worthwhile thing. So I believe that scientists should be open about their normativity. After all, we are human beings and as such have our norms on our minds, and it is actually disturbing and manipulative towards the citizen *not* to tell who we are. Humans can’t always keep quite apart the positive and the normative, and so when we openly declare our values, the citizen can “discount” for oneself and say “Ok, it is a liberal speaking, so he is talking about self-organization, invisible hand,

spontaneous order, etc., so it's the liberal speaking about the world he would like to see". I think open normativity is the key, and maybe Clemens can add something to that.

CS: Well, ok, I am not acting as a scientist at all in my capacity as a head of Prometheus and we don't claim to have an academic approach, we are not a research institute. We have many of those, of course, in Germany, many state-funded, some privately funded, and they probably have to be treading cautiously around these issues, because they want to retain a certain image of being impartial which is already extremely difficult, I believe. I mean - it is always a gamble how impartial you are if you, for example, chose a certain approach to the analysis of economy, the analysis of society, etc. It is difficult not to be normative in some way. That being said, I think that what is important for us and our work also is that we achieve two things with the people we address, or that we have two different goals: one is to help people argue for their normative viewpoints regarding economy, society, legislation, etc., in a way that is well-informed and that they can actually use the tools of science, the language of science in a way that helps their normative views not only be properly formulated, but also in a way that allows for discussions to take place. So not to use rhetorical tricks or just try to win over other people by contriving certain kinds of arguments, but rather to be able to understand arguments, your own and the other side's, and then to try to formulate your position in a way that makes it accessible for people to understand you. And, on the other hand, another goal we have is that people take us seriously, take our normative assumptions seriously. And for this to work, you really need to approach those questions on a ground as neutral as you possibly can so that you actually have the possibility to speak to people at all, and that you are not caught in your own bubble of arguments and key words you have been using all the time. So to avoid just keep repeating these arguments and rather actually listen to people and understand their arguments and try to formulate your own ideas in their language, try to create a sort of convergence in this debate.

RS: It is a kind of a dialogue you enter into with your audience...

CS: Yes... I just met somebody from another organization which is more on the ecological side, and we talked about dialogue and I said that it is so important to understand that dialogue is not just about speaking, but it is also about listening. Strangely people tend to forget that, mostly they think dialogue is about them finally being able to speak and speak...

RS: Dialogue is a lot about listening, indeed, I agree. Talking about language I think it could be interesting that we say something about metaphors - as you know political economy, every science, is full of metaphors. So, are there some metaphors that are popular in the field of political economy, but that you dislike and so struggle against, or are there, in your own rhetoric, some particular metaphors that you like to use?

SK: I can say something about the invisible hand. This year was the 300th anniversary of Adam Smith's birth and there were tons of conferences on Smith. Obviously the invisible hand is one of the most powerful metaphors in modernity because in some strange way it has come to symbolize what Clemens and I care extremely about, which is self-organization and the property of societies, of normal people like all of us here, to solve our own problems in self-organized ways. I said "in some strange way", because anybody who has little knowledge about Smith knows that the metaphor plays a very negligent part in his work. And yet it is powerful and everybody uses it. So the question is what do we do about it - can we say "No, he didn't mean it" and stop here - in the end people don't care about what somebody who is almost 300 or 100 years dead meant. It is a powerful metaphor, so I think we are in a way stuck with using it, and we should make it useful, we should try to explain it to the concrete audience we are talking about., And that, as you can imagine, would be very different if one is talking to high school students or to a less educated audience which knows little about markets. But I would always try to say "Ok, it is a metaphor which none of us can escape, it is everywhere and let's try to actually understand what a liberal economist means by using it". And then we come to different sets of metaphors, right, so it can be "self-organization", it can be "spontaneous order", it can be things like "markets work" or "markets tend to solve problems" - so depending on the audience, I would use very different ways to substantiate that metaphor of the invisible hand. And it is a metaphor which, personally, I don't mind, but Clemens and I have friends who are Smith scholars and they hate it, but in a certain way it is their problem, right. It is there, it is powerful, it is not ugly, it is not a caricature, it is just that Smith didn't mean to use it as we do. Well, most of the historical artefacts in the history of political economy are not used today the way they were used back then and yet they are here. So I think we should contextualize, we should try in the respective context in which we are talking to get people attracted to the power of the metaphor.

CS: I think I have at least two metaphors or two narratives which really bother me, which are used to describe our way of thinking and our values. One would be that people assume that we liberals want to leave people on their own, to leave them alone by trying to reduce the scope of state interventions in all parts of our lives, be it social security or lifestyle regulation; that we want to take these crutches away which are provided by politics - people tend to frame it in a way that we are leaving people alone. I would rather say that what we are trying to do is to empower people - we are not actually leaving them alone, but we believe in them, we believe that they can do it on their own, and it is not about us that we don't care about them, that we don't want to give enough attention to them, to their causes and their problems, but rather we think it is important that people are able to do things by themselves, that people receive value and self-esteem by doing things themselves, by taking responsibility for their own lives. That is one narrative. The other one is that the market economy, the whole capitalist system, whatever that may be, is exploitative, that the goal of the system is to exploit someone, to extract something, and this narrative has a certain

basis even in our camp – so you have these very rationally minded, very cold economists who describe the market process as something where everybody is just seeking their own benefit, just seeking for a point where they can extract as much as they can. But we also have even prestigious liberal activists and thinkers who actually make this point – they say: “It is about yourself, and caring for others, while giving attention to other people’s problems is actually nothing that should matter to you, or even drags you down”. Like Ayn Rand who is a good example. So, we have people who are actually contributing to this exploitative narrative and I always try to focus on a very different narrative, which can lead to the same ideal of giving people freedom and liberty: the cooperation narrative. According to this narrative, people are actually by nature beings who want to cooperate, who want to focus on each other, who actually care for their neighbor and even for a neighbor they even don’t know, they may care for them – if we see pictures on the internet of war victims in Ukraine or Israel, Gaza or Somalia, or Yemen, we care for these people, that is something which is part of our nature. And so, in order to bring this will to cooperate, this desire to cooperate, we need freedom, we need liberty, we need space where people can actually cooperate. So that would be a narrative or a metaphor which I would much prefer because it describes what people feel and it is also a much more likable metaphor, it really helps you to make your point.

RS: Working together and being cooperative.

CS: Yep.

RS: And now coming to the end of our conversation, could you say something about what you want to achieve by means of your activities?

SK: It all depends on the duration of our projects, but let’s hope that we will be lucky and these endeavors have a long future ahead of them. Then of course, we, somewhat immodestly hope to change people’s minds – now the question is who these people are, and in what ways we want to change their minds. Our two institutes have, as we said, slightly different target groups, but we want to convince people that liberalism is something deeply humane, we can even say liberalism is something like humanism, but that is a long discussion. It is humane, it is something which empowers ordinary people to do extraordinary things. So, what we hope to achieve is that more people in Berlin, in Germany, or elsewhere, understand that this idea has, for some bad reasons, had the bad luck in recent decades to get rhetorically very ugly in many people’s eyes, and that rhetorical ugliness hides the beauty of the idea. There is nothing elitist about the idea, there is nothing about some establishment which tries top-down to form society, but quite on the contrary. So, if more people understand what liberalism in our sense means – that it is basically about creating conditions for normal people to have a wonderful life, then things will be fine. But again, the question is how long do we have the time to do that. The vision is, for us here at the Ludwig Erhard Forum, to show that liberalism is something humane, that economics is the science which shows

you the beauty of self-organization. In this sense liberalism and economics are not quite twins, but very close siblings: liberalism talks about self-organization, while economics shows in more practical ways how and under which conditions self-organization works, both in the market and in other contexts of society. If people realize the beauty of this self-organization property in human nature, I think, our job will be done. But it requires all kinds of rhetorical skills which, personally, I am still in the process of learning.

CS: We have a primary goal which would be to convince as many people as possible about our values and our ideas, that they can actually relate to them in a way that they share them, and these are the general values of trusting people and of being fond of cooperation, and believing that the dynamics and possibilities of cooperation can make the world a better place. This is something we want as many people as possible to share. The secondary goal would be that people take us seriously, so that they take us seriously intellectually as equally valid partners, as people who debate in a way and communicate in a way that can be taken seriously because it is well founded, it is well argued, it is, in simple terms, sound. But also, that they take us seriously seeing that we also want a better world - we are not enemies of anyone, except of those who actually oppose this better world: racists, nationalists or the ones that hate other people by some other criterion. So maybe some people may not agree with the tools we provide, or the ways to achieve this better world, but at least it should be recognized that the aim is the same. All this enables dialogue in a much better way. So this secondary goal is very important, also because we want to get into conversations, we want actually to achieve something: not so much to bring an ideology to victory, to appear as the winning side, but to help make this world effectively a better place in the ways people aspire.

RS: Clemens and Stefan I would like to thank you very much for this conversation and now I would like to invite some of my colleagues if they have some questions.

Associate Prof. Dr Donka Petrova : I would also like to thank you for this meeting and the opportunity to hear about your ideas and your activities. Maybe it is not so much of a specific question, but I would like to ask if you may suggest some reading, some materials, some sources, maybe websites that you think might be useful in the long term for us as academics, for our students.

CS: When we talk about the strategy of trying to change people's minds, trying to convince people, trying to make them understand a position, there are usually three people I refer to specifically, probably you have heard of all three of them. First, it is Joseph Overton and the notion of the "Overton window", about how debates work, of what can be said and what cannot be said, and how you can move this Overton window by pushing debates in a certain direction, that is one of the inspirations. Second, Antonio Gramsci, the Italian communist and activist from the 1920s and 30s who developed the concept of "cultural hegemony", so that you need to get into

people's minds with your ideas by a culture, not via academic discourse or politics, but also that people need to understand by intuitively feeling in a certain way that your values and ideas are important. Finally, Friedrich August von Hayek, the Austrian economist and social philosopher, especially his article "The Intellectuals and Socialism" from 1949, which is certainly something like the founding document for our think-tank. Hayek explained there how important it is to get intellectuals to understand and appreciate your own ideas and values, so that you can actually inform society. He also addresses the question of who is effectively in charge of providing a society with an input of ideas. That's a very interesting piece I think.

SK: Clemens mentioned three classics, I would like to update those with three names of our times which both of us care about: Deirdre McCloskey, she has written extensively on the issues of the rhetoric of economics, but also in recent times the rhetoric of the bourgeois era, as she calls it, and how changes in language in the early modern times enabled modernity. The second one is a Swedish popularizer of science, Clemens has translated his book in German, Johan Norberg, he has written very recent book *The Capitalist Manifesto*, but also previously *Progress: Ten Reasons to Look Forward to the Future*, and some 20 years ago – *In Defense of Global Capitalism*. He is an extremely persuasive person, both in his videos on YouTube and in his writings. And very practically speaking, a website called humanprogress.org: it is something produced by the Cato Institute in Washington which sends out an excellent newsletter every other day. It is very fascinating to see there, by very simple stories - it can be some numbers, it can be just a story - how normal people contributed and keep contributing to this amazing progress of the past 200 years. And also, to get some optimism out of those stories, because we live in a time where pessimism is everywhere. I come to Bulgaria several times a year, but it is not quite different from Germany in many ways. This website gives you every day some small beacon of optimism where you can see that, if we succeeded in preserving the world we live in, if we succeed in not busting it like we did in 1914, that it is the activities of normal people that constantly create the progress which will get us out of the mess. So, these would be my three sources.

RS: So if there are no other questions, I would like to thank you again, Stefan and Clemens for this very interesting conversation, and I hope that in the future we would have the opportunity to cooperate, as it was said cooperation and working together is the right strategy...

DP: ...yes, exchange of ideas is absolutely crucial. As you mentioned about Germany and Bulgaria - two very different places in the world and yet they both face very similar challenges, especially in relation to these topics and issues. So there is a broad field for cooperation ahead of us.

SK: And perhaps a final shoutout to technology – we had difficulties today with the Zoom connection, but even with the imperfect connection we could make this

conversation possible, and we could even see each other - which for Adam Smith is extremely important when it comes to different contexts in conversations and rhetoric. So, without technology we could not have met for free across thousands of miles and have a meaningful conversation, almost for free. So, this is perhaps also part of the humanprogress.org.

RS: Thank you and have a great day, bye.