



17, avenue Guillaume | L-1651 Luxembourg | R.C.S. Luxembourg: F 1008

Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Lecture

17th October 2019

"Whither Europe in the Context of the rise of Asia"

Dear President, dear members of the British-Luxembourg Society,

Dear Ambassador of the United Kingdom,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

We have gathered tonight to listen to a great speaker, and he will be introduced in a moment by our president David Clark.

Welcome Lord Green,

We are here of course as members and friends of the British-Luxembourg Society, which today is happy to celebrate the 'renaissance', or revival of the 'Winston Churchill Memorial lectures'. May I congratulate the president and all those who took part in the effort to make this success possible.

The first speaker tonight should have been our good friend Jacques Loesch, but unfortunately he is not in a position to be with us due to a little health issue. Let us all together address our best wishes to him, and of course a very big 'thank you' for all his efforts during an impressive series of years.

Thank you Jacques !!!,
and our best wishes.

Winston Churchill stayed in Luxembourg in the aftermath of World War II, and he proudly wore the decoration handed to him by Grand Duchess Charlotte. Today his statue stands here in our capital. He happened to carry the name of a great Englishman who passed through our region before him, John Churchill, remembered as 'Malbrouk' and his name is still attached to a castle in close-by Lorraine. May I add that a neighbourhood of our capital carries the name of 'Church Hill', or should I use 'lezeburjesch' here : the 'Kierch-bierg', well-known internationally by now! No link with Winston in this case however !

But nowadays, among many others, European states-persons and judges gather in Kirchberg : it is a place, with its unique activity and as such it represents already a significant moment in Europe's long saga ... But will it be more than a step, does its development actually embody a giant's step forward ?

It has to be stressed : History, with a capital letter, has already been going on for quite a long time, and it is not over yet.

Tonight's story, at the British-Luxembourg Society, or perhaps should I say our very own 'history' (with or without a capital letter ... ?), starts with a famous sentence, familiar to many, to almost every one of us : 'Léiw Letzbuerger'.



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‘Léiw Letzeburger’, or ‘Dear Luxembourgers’, these were the words Grand Duchess Charlotte used at the start of her interventions at the BBC during World War II. Two words which carry an enormous emotional load, still today, and maybe for a very long time to come. No surprise then that they were chosen as the title for a most beautiful film on this dramatic period made some years ago by a group of Luxembourgish and British filmmakers. Grand Duke Henri was present for the ‘première’ of that film at the British Film Academy in London. Two words which are at the roots of the contemporary friendship between our peoples. For us they symbolize a union of minds, efforts and sacrifices which allowed an enormous leap forward for our peoples, and for Europe, as well as for the world.

Conflicting interests surface often and easily, and they may, as we all know, cause havoc or damages of various sorts, that may hurt many. This is not to be accepted. Let us keep it in mind : an essential task for all of us is the channelling of tensions and hopefully and ultimately their elimination. Warmth and love can help a lot, in their own way, to make the world go round.

«Prönz Jang» was also in London during World War II, and he took part in the armed reconquest of the European continent, defeating fascism and Nazism. We remember our former Grand Duke Jean fondly, and we greatly regret that he could no longer be with us tonight, as he had firmly intended to do.

We thank him, we thank his Mother ; and we thank Winston Churchill because he stood firm, and thus paved the way for the victory of the rule of law, the respect of rights and of democracy, and for the ‘renaissance’ of brotherhood between the deeply divided populations of Europe. He saved Britain and he made Europe possible again. And he made clear : Great Britain without Europe could just not be ! It was a huge ‘reset’, to use contemporary slang.

Today’s story is therefore also the story of the many, the thousand’s of British people living now across the channel, also in Luxembourg, who came here to work, live and stay among the Luxembourgers. And of course it is also the story of those ‘Continental’s who chose to live in Britain.

We are conscious that in our time, during these weeks, on this very peculiar day of October 17 2019, a deal is done. What will it bring ? History will hold its breath : it will look very closely, well aware of what is at stake, and keep an eye on us, as the future appears uncertain. History is not over, and ‘humans’, politicians in this case, should take good care before trying to write a new chapter. Who would dare say, at this moment, that Europeans, after all ordinary humans, will stick to reason, that our fate is not and will not be in jeopardy ?

This society and its members will do the utmost, I am confident, to work strenuously to prevent the loosening of the bond, and indeed to strengthen the kinship and brotherhood between our two old European peoples, of Great Britain and Luxembourg, and to foster the sistership between the nations in Europe, on our shared continent.

Congratulations and thank you.

Hubert Wurth, BLS Patron
Luxembourg, 17th October 2019