

## EDITORIAL

# Culture Matters: From Epstein's Training Camp for Depravity To a Renaissance Worth Fighting For

by Jason Ross

Feb. 12—Every day brings new sordid and reprehensible details about the practices of Jeffrey Epstein and his collaborators and “guests.” Some speculate that the point of his operation was to compile incriminating documentation of high-powered individuals to be used to control them through blackmail. But this hypothesis misses the broader cultural point of sadistic depravity: the formation of a cadre of “elite” individuals willing to advocate and implement policies that ordinary human conscience would reject.

Although these hidden facts are now seeing the light, we can look at what has *not* been hidden, and ask: How did we get here? How does the world come to a point where a gruesome genocide is televised? Where the threat of nuclear devastation is treated cavalierly? Where economic despair is waved away by pointing to charts of the stock market?

Epstein's circle did not arise in a vacuum; elite imperial cultures have long trained their successors to separate power from empathy.

The British elite are infamous for the abuse and torment characteristic of the “public schools” that have prepared scions of high rank for their future roles as administrators of the brutish empire. What image of man must be beaten into children to prepare them to treat their fellow human beings with the disdain required to maintain a hegemonic system? Has this abuse been tolerated for centuries precisely because it is an integral part of the pupils' “education”?

The Epstein affair, far from being simply a scandal, is a verdict on culture. It forces the question: What image of humanity is shaping our institutions?

If power is divorced from moral and intellectual development, strategic recklessness and social decay follow naturally. No reform limited to prosecutions or policy tweaks can address that root problem. A civilization survives only when its leadership orients toward the advancement of human creativity and dignity.

What would such a leadership do today?

The collapse of the trans-Atlantic financial economic system—the elephant still in the room—forces a choice: Either cling to a fading, anti-human system, or reorganize society around real production, science, and culture.

The United States Centennial Exposition of 1876 represented a very different kind of culture than that prevailing today. The exposition was a grand world's fair that drew millions of visitors to Philadelphia, showcasing breakthroughs in technology, manufacturing, and global cooperation as a celebration of the hundredth anniversary of American independence. Exhibits of industrial engines, productive machinery, communication innovations, and artistic pavilions from dozens of nations glorified human ingenuity and shared advancement on a truly universal stage. The celebration assumed that *progress* was the purpose of civilization.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. Look forward to the 300th anniversary: What should it showcase?

Imagine a Tricentennial Celebration of the future: fusion energy projects providing power around the world, and in space; human settlements on the Moon and reaching toward Mars; advanced infrastructure

and scientific education initiatives that uplift the lives of billions and make poverty a museum exhibit rather than a daily experience. Such a celebration would declare the success of a new renaissance—where human potential is the central measure of civilization’s success.

This is the culture we should choose: one that el-

evates the human spirit through creation and discovery, that seizes the vast promise of scientific and economic progress rather than the undignified search for domination. Culture becomes strategy: an engine of development that shapes policy, fuels diplomacy, and inspires every generation to expand what is possible for all mankind.