Ministère de la culture et de la communication

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SESSION 2015

Épreuve orale d'admission n°2 : épreuve d'anglais

3 octobre 2016

La seconde épreuve d'admission consiste en une conversation dans une langue vivante étrangère à partir d'un texte.
La langue vivante étrangère faisant l'objet de cette épreuve est choisie par le candidat lors de l'inscription parmi les langues suivantes: allemand, anglais, arabe, chinois, espagnol, italien, japonais, russe, portugais, polonais.
(Préparation de l'épreuve : 30 minutes ; durée de l'épreuve : 30 minutes ; coefficient 1).

Avertissement :

- avant de commencer, vérifiez que le sujet qui vous a été remis comporte toutes les questions ; signalez aux surveillants tout de suite les anomalies éventuelles (page manquante, page illisible...).

Ce document comporte 2 pages au total.

SUJET n°7

Charlemagne | Magical misery tour

Visits to Europe's nastiest spots are becoming popular

WITH its high unemployment, pervasive crime and rows of empty shops, the Belgian town of Charleroi is a "*musée du globalisation*", quips Nico Buissart, with something approaching pride. The former art student has run tours of his town, which was once voted the ugliest place in Europe, since 2009; he now conducts two or three a week. When Charlemagne took the tour, the hulking Mr Buissart led the group down concrete paths littered with scrap metal and defaced by graffiti, under the shadow of looming steelworks, through waist-high weeds and up an enormous slag heap to take in the view of old factories and piles of waste from industries that have mostly moved elsewhere.

Eccentric souls have long enjoyed exploring miserable bits of the continent. Valencia boasts a guided tour of the numerous big-ticket construction projects, some of them abandoned, launched by its corrupt politicians. In eastern Europe, fans of Soviet architecture regularly trek to long-forgotten places to uncover hidden brutalist gems. An alternative German guide to Berlin suggests spurning the Tiergarten and the Brandenburg Gate in favour of the hideous *Schwerbelastungskörper*, a cylinder of concrete laid down by Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's architect, which is so gargantuan that it cannot be moved.

Lately, such tours of urban dysfunction have become popular for new reasons. With terrorism and the alleged failures of globalisation and multiculturalism dominating many countries' political discussions, more and more people are keen to see the benighted European places where these disasters are supposedly unfolding. Unemployment, segregation and terrorist attacks may not be the sort of thing that local politicians want their towns to be known for, but they create a brand that can serve as the basis of a small, perverse tourism industry.

In Molenbeek, a poor part of Brussels where at least two of the terrorists involved in the Paris attacks last November lived (and where Salah Abdeslam, the surviving suspect, was captured), guided tours used to run around five times a year. Since the attacks there have been 50, says Anne Brumagne, who works for the association that sets up tours throughout the capital. In late September Daniel Pipes, an American critic of Islamism, will take a group to Berlin, Paris and Stockholm to look at what he terms the "new Europe". A highlight of the trip, he says, will be so-called "no-go zones": places which, because of their large Muslim populations or high crime rates, are believed by anxious outsiders to be inaccessible to non-Muslims or the police.

In many ways such tours are a good thing. People who know Molenbeek only from news accounts assume it is "a hellhole", complains Ms Brumagne. After visiting, they are surprised at how lively it is. In April a big modern-art gallery opened there (though its opening was delayed by the terrorist attacks in Brussels in March). Community centres, gardens and social projects have sprung up, aided by an enterprising first-term mayor. In general, no-go zone designations are ridiculed by those who know the areas in question. A pundit on America's Fox News went so far as to claim that Birmingham, Britain's second-biggest city, was one. (He later apologised. The murder rate in Birmingham, England is less than 1/20th that in Birmingham, Alabama.) Visits by non-Muslim tourists help demonstrate that the down-at-heel parts of Europe are not wastelands or outposts of Islamic State.

Nonetheless, the strange appeal of such areas hints at the magnitude of the problem facing European politicians. Many of the Belgians on the Molenbeek tour are seeing a side of their country they have never experienced before. Neighbourhoods where the signs are in Arabic, Moroccan men lounge outside tea rooms and women shop in headscarves may not actually be forbidden to them, as the term no-go zones suggests. But the fact that they find such places exotic shows how segregated their society is.

This failure to integrate is a big problem. After a year of terrorist attacks and an unprecedented influx of refugees from the Middle East, Europeans are worried about immigration as never before. According to Ipsos MORI, a pollster, Europeans are among the most likely people in the world to doubt that refugees can integrate, and they hold some of the most negative views of immigrants. Fully 65% of Italians, 60% of Belgians and 57% of French people think there are too many immigrants in their country. While over a third of Americans and Britons think that immigration has had an overall positive impact on their countries, a measly 11% of Belgians and French do.

Segregation today, segregation for ever?

Europe's urban divides are in some ways more subtle than those in America. When Americans think of dysfunctional places they imagine cities like Detroit, where large areas are literally in ruins, says Mr Pipes. "It's quite surprising that places like Molenbeek are pleasant-looking," he admits. Yet this can make some issues harder to tackle. Molenbeek is linked to nearly every recent terrorist plot in France and Belgium; Salah Abdeslam lived just around the corner from its police station. The neighbourhood's density, social life and complex informal economy may have made it harder to track him down. Jean Jambon, Belgium's interior minister, wants to ramp up security forces in the district. That might help law enforcement, but it will not tackle the aspects of poverty that contribute to radicalisation: poor education, unemployment, lack of adequate housing—and social segregation.

By bringing public attention to problem areas, urban-dysfunction tours may help nudge the political system to address such issues. Then again, politicians may simply learn to celebrate the mess. When Mr Buissart first started his tours, local politicians in Charleroi complained that he was too negative, he says. Now the city's website advertises jogging events through its industrial landscape and bicycling tours along disused railway tracks. Misery has officially become a marketing opportunity. ■