



A FRACTURED CIVILIZATION:
The European Union at Sixty

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www.frontpagemag.com
Printed in the United States of America

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On March 25, the 27 members of the European Union celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which began the process of creating an “an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe,” as the treaty proclaimed. Nine months after the shocking referendum that approved Great Britain’s departure from the E.U., the assembled ministers put on a brave face. In the Declaration of Rome promulgated at the event, they [talked](#) of a “strong community of peace, freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law,” and reaffirmed their commitment to an “undivided and indivisible” union.” But such bravado could not quiet the discontent and malaise that have long troubled this “bold, far-sighted” project.

Indeed, fretting over the viability and

inequities of the E.U. has been constant since its birth. Such worry also marked the fiftieth anniversary celebrations ten years ago. That event was “shadowed by a sense that the union is stuck in something like a midlife crisis—unhappy about its divided present, uncertain about what path to take in the future,” according to the *New York Times*.¹ Such doubt was reflected in polls that found less than half of Europeans approved of the E.U.

The 2008 financial crisis focused this discontent: Greece’s near-default on its sovereign debt and the continuing threat of a Grexit; the humiliation of accepting a multibillion-dollar International Monetary Fund contribution to the E.U.’s near-trillion-dollar bailout fund; the renewal of old nationalist differences and enmities between the north and south; and the still-simmering economic crises stalking states like Italy and France—all

¹ *New York Times* (26 March 2004).

laid bare the economic inequities and disparities among the various E.U. states, and challenged the ideal of transnational unity and harmony. More recently, the Brexit vote and the influx of 1.3 million [refugees](#) just in 2015, the majority from war-torn Syria and Afghanistan, have further highlighted the contradictions and questionable assumptions of the transnational, technocratic idealism defining the “new Europe.”

Decades of crises large and small are seemingly propelling the E.U. and Europe in general toward the point where the stresses become unsustainable and lead to dissolution or a reconfiguration of the union. This “bold, far-sighted” experiment has been troubled from its birth, and the “European Dream,” as one champion has called it, may be nearing its last days.²

² Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream* (New York: 2004), 8.

The E.U. Economy

Numerous critics of the E.U. have for years pointed out that its collective economy chronically underperforms because of an intrusive regulatory regime, high taxes, and expensive social welfare benefits. The data tell the tale. The E.U.'s [GDP](#) of \$16.5 trillion is close to that of the U.S. at \$18.4 trillion. But average per capita GDP in the E.U. is significantly lower: \$35,634 compared to \$57,468 in the U.S. Look more closely at [individual](#) E.U. member states, and stark inequalities emerge: Germany's \$41,963 or Denmark's \$53,417 more than double Greece's \$18,104 or Hungary's \$12,664 (the lowest U.S. state per capita GDP is Mississippi's \$31,881). The same disparities exist for [unemployment](#) rates. The Eurozone rate is 9.3%, compared to 4.4% in the U.S. But rates in the E.U. range from Germany's 3.9% to Greece's

22.5%. For young people (under age 25) rates are worse: 21% for the Eurozone, with the same divisions between north and south: 7% in Germany versus 47.3% in Greece.

Regulatory excess, high businesses taxes, and generous social welfare spending also contribute to the E.U.'s economic malaise. On the World Bank's "ease of doing business" [scale](#), with 1 awarded to economies that are the friendliest to business, the U.S. earns an 8, while the two largest economies in the E.U., Germany and France, rank 17 and 29 respectively. The E.U. as a whole ranks 30. High tax rates also are a drag on economic growth. The [U.S.](#) averages 30% of income in total taxes, the [E.U.](#) 45%. As for spending on social welfare programs, the [U.S.](#) and the [E.U.](#) both spend roughly 21% of GDP. This last statistic should remind us that the U.S.

has been steadily eroding the economic advantages it enjoys over the E.U.

These economic disparities in part explain the divisiveness that erupted during the 2008 Great Recession, and the continuing resentment of the poorer E.U. countries against the richer like Germany on whom they have had to rely for financial help. Such divisions are a powerful centrifugal force that challenges the solidarity of the E.U. member states, and give teeth to the charge that the E.U. has benefitted Germany and other rich countries more than Europe as a whole.

Unfortunately, there are few signs that the E.U. is making significant changes to head off another fiscal calamity. The debt crisis afflicting Greece, which after three bailouts owes almost \$390 billion it is unlikely to pay back, remains unresolved. More

worrisome is the condition of France, the second largest economy in the E.U. and sixth largest of the world's sovereign nations. Unemployment is nearly 10%, youth unemployment double that. Economic [growth](#) is one of the weakest in the union: 1.3% compared to 1.7% for the Eurozone, 1.9% for the E.U., and 3.9% for Germany. Taxes on employees are the highest in the E.U.: nearly [58%](#) of a salary's cost goes to the government. Public [debt](#) is expected to reach 96% of GDP in 2017, and government [spending](#) as a percentage of GDP ranks second among OECD countries, 56% compared to 38% in the U.S. Social welfare [spending](#) takes 30% of GDP, ten points higher than the the U.S and the E.U. average.

The E.U. very likely can survive the economic crisis in Greece, but not one in France. As historian Walter Russell Mead [writes](#), “The most likely outlook

is for continuing economic and political stagnation in France, a few inadequate reforms that are bitterly resented and resisted, and a gradual, continuing rise in social tensions and alienations.” If new French president Emmanuel Macron cannot deliver on significant economic reforms as he promised—a likely scenario given the serial failure of previous French leaders—the damage to the E.U. will be devastating.

Demography

Another bad sign for Europe’s economic health is the failure of Europeans to reproduce. It takes an average of 2.1 children per woman just to replace a population; Europe’s average is 1.55, and it’s that high in part because of more fecund immigrants. Looking deeper into [individual countries](#) reveals numbers even more dismal. Italy’s rate is 1.43, Spain’s 1.49, Portugal 1.53, and

Poland 1.34—and those are traditionally Catholic countries. Economic powerhouse Germany's is 1.44.

This demographic decline, along with increasing longevity, means that all these countries will grow older and older, as schools close, playgrounds empty, and millions of people grow up without aunts, uncles, or cousins. Today the [average age](#) in the E.U. is 42.4 years, and by 2080 30% of Europeans will be 75 and older. These projections bode ill for the E.U.'s economic future. By 2060, on average [Europe](#) will have only two workers for every retiree, and 12% fewer people in the workforce. The E.U.'s richest country, [Germany](#), whose working-age population will shrink from 50 million in 2008 to between 34 and 38 million in 2060, alone will need 1.5 million new workers to stabilize its retirement system.

Without growth in the work force, old age pensions and health care will eat up more and more of national wealth even as fewer workers are paying taxes, leading to economic stagnation and greater debt and deficits. Fewer productive people also mean less dynamism in the economy, for human creativity and entrepreneurial “animal spirits” are modern capitalism’s greatest resources. The uneven effects of these trends across Europe will deepen the fault lines already running through the E.U. project.

The Democracy Deficit

Much of European resentment against the E.U. focusses on the so-called “democracy deficit.” For all the rhetoric of an “ever-closer union” of the European peoples, the E.U. is more accurately a union not of peoples, but of national ministers and governments. The

ordinary citizen has little say in what policies are adopted, and the bureaucrats running the union are seldom accountable or even known to voters.

This concentration of unaccountable power is obvious in the [ruling structure](#) of the E.U. Member-state citizens vote directly only for the European Parliament, which votes on, but cannot initiate legislation. The other three main governing bodies are responsible for legislating and executing laws. The European Council is made up of the heads of states from each member state, and they set the policy agenda for the union. The Council of Ministers, one minister from each member state chosen by the topic under consideration, has legislative and executive power. Finally, the European Commission is the main executive branch of the government. It comprises political appointees from

each member state, and is responsible for drafting and enforcing the laws of the E.U. Meanwhile, the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union can trump national laws and [violate](#) the rights of member-states and their citizens.

This top-heavy structure, comprising mostly member-state government ministers and appointees, insulates the governing bodies from direct accountability to the people, and compromises the transparency democratic citizens need in order to monitor those who make decisions affecting their lives. This disdain for vox populi became obvious in 2005, when the Treaty Establishing a European Constitution was put before the voters in France, the Netherlands, and Ireland, and they rejected it. The 2009 Treaty of Lisbon that created the European Constitution did not risk the voters' disapproval, but

was signed by representatives from each member state, and ratified by member-state governments, with the exception of Ireland, which did hold a referendum. Britain's successful popular referendum to leave the E.U. ensures that Brussels will not again make the mistake of consulting the will of the masses.

Equally significant is the hypocritical contradiction between the transnational ideals of a government supposedly able to transcend parochial, zero-sum national interests, and the privileging of government officials, ministers, and appointees from sovereign nations in deciding how the union is managed. Such a structure guarantees that the national interests of each state will take precedence, and more powerful states like Germany and France will trump those of lesser states. The primacy of national interests became obvious during the 2008 economic crisis, and more

recently the 2015 influx of refugees and migrants. But even before the E.U. violated Article 125 of the Lisbon Treaty, which prohibits financial bailouts, in order to rescue Greece, E.U. members had ignored the E.U.'s fiscal rules. The Stability and Growth Pact of 1998 put a 3% of GDP limit on budget deficits, and 60% limit on national debt. In subsequent years every country except three has at some point violated the 3% limit on deficits. As for the 60% limit on debt, in 2015 the average [national debt](#) was 83% for the E.U., and 90% for the Eurozone. George Washington's wisdom remains valid: "No nation can be trusted farther than it is bounded by its interests."

For all its rejection of nationalism and its centrifugal cultures, interests, and mores, the E.U. in practice bypasses the particular, diverse peoples of Europe, instead putting decision-making in the hands of political elites from sovereign

nations, who often have more in common with their fellow elites than they do with their own citizens. And that means more powerful nations will benefit more from the E.U. than will the less powerful. This division accounts for much of the discontent with the E.U. on the part of those European nations like Greece, who feel pushed around by Germany; or like the East European nations lectured to by E.U. officials like Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, who haughtily [said](#) of those opposing Angela Merkel's feckless immigration policy, "I would invite those in Europe who try to change the migration agenda we have adopted—I would like to remind them to be serious about this and not to give in to these base reactions that I do not like." As in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, some E.U. member states are more equal than others.

Muslim Immigration

The problem of immigration into Europe from developing nations, particularly Muslim ones, has bedeviled Europe long before the creation of the E.U. Migration to Europe accelerated in the decades after the Second World War. Migrants came first as “temporary” workers, many from underdeveloped regions of their home countries—Turks to Germany, Pakistanis to England, Algerians to France. In the following years “asylum seekers” and “political refugees,” many of them economic migrants in disguise, added to their numbers. E.U. and British laws forbid deporting migrants, even murderers, to any country where they might face the death penalty or harsh abuse, and lax “family reunification” protocols increase numbers even further.

These ill-conceived immigration policies have been abetted by leaders in many European countries who have seen immigration as the solution to the problem of low birthrates and the need for workers to pay the taxes necessary for financing generous social welfare benefits—“[replacement populations](#),” as the U.N. calls them, for the Europeans not being born. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel’s open invitation to migrants from the Middle East has been rationalized with this argument. Germany alone will need 500,000 immigrants per year through 2050, reports the [Bertelsmann Foundation](#). “Immigrants are really important to fill the shortage of workers,” and so “immigration helps Germany and is really good and useful,” [according](#) to Axel Plünnecke, a professor at the Cologne Institute, which estimates that by 2020 Germany will need a million

workers for jobs in science, technology, and engineering. Unfortunately, most immigrants come with few marketable skills needed by a modern economy, resist the necessary job-training, and are eligible for welfare transfers, leaving them with little incentive to train for jobs.

More important, the E.U. has not made it easy for European countries to demand and enforce assimilation to the home country's culture, mores, and values. Many Muslim immigrants, living in an increasingly irreligious and hedonistic European culture inimical to the tenets of their faith, have found little incentive or inclination to assimilate to an "infidel" culture. Strict and lengthy citizenship requirements, and burdensome regulations on job-hiring, at the same time generous welfare transfers have been available to immigrants, have reinforced this faith-based preference for self-segregation.

The result has been immigrant enclaves walled off from the larger culture, from the *banlieues* of Paris to the satellite “dish cities” of Amsterdam, the Small Heath district of Birmingham to the Molenbeek neighborhood of Brussels, which England’s *The Guardian* [reports](#) is “becoming known as Europe’s jihadi central.” It’s no surprise that they congregate in these “no-go zones,” areas police rarely enter or patrol, where they remain underemployed, undereducated, and over-represented in prisons and on welfare rolls.

All these circumstances have made young Muslims ripe for self-radicalization or recruitment by jihadists, often through local mosques and Islamic centers. Even before the latest influx of migrants in 2015, various intensities of social disorder and creeping Islamization were growing, from sharia courts in

England to Muslims in Paris taking over public spaces to perform daily prayers, to gangs of Muslim men in Berlin enforcing [sharia law](#) in the streets. Violent crimes have increased over the last several decades, a disproportionate number of them perpetrated by second and third-generation and recent immigrants. In France, for years burning cars has been a chronic ritual of violence committed mainly by young Muslim men. A thousand cars were burned last New Year's Eve, and on Bastille Day in 2017, [riots](#) in Muslim districts of Paris broke out and raged for two days, leaving nearly a thousand burned cars. [Sweden](#) averages one car burned a day, and is plagued by other acts of violence and vandalism, particularly during Ramadan. Riots over police actions, and gang attacks on trains, shops, and government buildings are also common, as are [acid attacks](#) against women, usually Muslim,

deemed to be in violation of Islamic law.

This violent criminal disorder has been exacerbated by over a million male migrants allowed into Europe over the last few years, among whom are thousands of jihadists and veterans of the conflict in Syria. In Germany during the first five months of 2017, 1,600 [attacks](#) with knives, machetes, and axes, an average of ten per day, were reported. Over the last ten years, such crimes have increased 1200%, from 300 in 2007 to about 4000 in 2016. [Honor killings](#) have surged as well, as has genital mutilation of Muslim girls. That same year the number of [immigrants](#) suspected of criminal acts increased nearly 53%. [Sweden](#) is another European country that has enthusiastically welcomed immigrants, mostly from Muslim countries, going back to 1975. Since then, as of 2015,

violent crime increased by 300%, and of 2014, rape by 1,472%. In 2010, Sweden had the third highest number of women raped per 100,000 in the world.

Indeed, across Europe a “[rape jihad](#),” as Andy McCarthy calls it, is underway. In Denmark, between 2004 and 2010 one third of those convicted of sexual assault were immigrants. In the northern English town of Rotherham, gangs of mostly Pakistani immigrants for years were sexually preying on children and girls, at least 1400 between 1997-2013. In Cologne, on New Year’s Eve of 2015 nearly a thousand women were attacked and sexually assaulted by gangs of immigrant men. Other attacks took place in Hamburg and Stuttgart. [Austria](#) has been especially victimized by these brazen attacks, perpetrated mainly by Afghan refugees in public spaces like trains, parks, and swimming

pools. In just one issue of the *Österreich*, a free newspaper distributed daily on public transit, three attempted rapes by Afghan immigrants were reported.

These daily criminal acts, which Norwegian writer “Fjordman” [calls](#) the “Little Terror,” rarely make it to the attention of the global media, unlike the deadly [terrorist attacks](#) that have increased over the last few years. Between 2014 and 2017, there have been over 150 attacks and plots. France was attacked 10 times (237 dead); Britain has suffered three attacks just in 2017 (35 dead); Brussels was attacked four times (36 dead), Germany five times (12 dead), Sweden once (5 dead), Spain once (14 dead), and Denmark and Finland once (each attack leaving two dead). Over 1400 were injured in these attacks, a toll that exceeds the number killed in the spectacular public transit

attacks in Madrid 2004 (191 dead) and London 2005 (52 dead). But in some ways they are more demoralizing, since a larger and greater variety of Europe's public spaces are being attacked more frequently, increasing people's fear and sense of vulnerability. And given the tens of thousands of jihadi agents that have come to Europe in the last few years, such attacks are sure to continue in the future.

The E.U.'s response to these attacks, moreover, has put further strains on European unity. After the influx of 2015 and the dramatic increase in terror attacks, many countries, including Austria, Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden, reimposed some border controls, a de facto revision of the Schengen Area agreement that allows free travel among all 27 E.U. states. In 2015 Eastern European states like Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic,

and Slovakia started building physical barriers on their borders, and refused to accept any refugees. In June 2017 the European Commission initiated disciplinary proceedings against Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic for refusing to accept their assigned quotas of migrants, even though the [majority](#) of those countries' citizens—70% in Hungary—are against allowing Syrian migrants into their countries.

The charges of xenophobia, racism, and other “base reactions,” as Jean-Claude Juncker said, from many Western European leaders; their seeming indifference to the social disorder, crime, and terrorism many migrants are bringing into Europe; and their arrogant insensitivity to the different cultural mores, religiosity, and histories of Eastern European countries, have all widened the fissures among E.U. member states.

Also divisive has been many European countries' bad habit of allowing Muslims and Islamic organizations to impose their religious beliefs and mores on the wider culture and public spaces. Christian [churches](#) in Europe are being demolished—2800 are slated for destruction in France alone— even as more and bigger mosques are being built, some financed by the Qataris, who fund radicals in Libya, Iraq, and Somalia. One of Christendom's great cathedrals, in Córdoba, is currently under [attack](#) by jihadist Muslims and left-wing Spanish secularists, who want to turn it into a “space for the meeting of faiths,” virtually desacralizing it. Sharia courts—100 just in [London](#)— are allowed to function, no matter how much they [violate](#) the host country's laws, particularly on matters of divorce, family life, and the treatment of women.

Such appeasement includes the violation of citizens' right to free and open speech. E.U. and government officials and institutions regularly censor their agencies and punish their citizens in order to avoid the charge of "racism" or "Islamophobia": [ignoring](#) illiberal and sexist sharia courts, and not prosecuting those who practice polygamy and forced marriages; [pressuring](#) social media like [Facebook](#) and Twitter to censor alleged "hate speech" posts and websites like Jihad Watch and the Gatestone Institute; [convicting](#) Dutch politician Geert Wilders of "insulting a group and inciting discrimination" for publicly demanding fewer Moroccan migrants to the Netherlands; [attributing](#) anti-Semitic violence to right-wing extremists rather than to Muslims who commit the lion's share of attacks; [arresting](#) a candidate for the European Parliament for reading aloud excerpts about Islam from Winston

Churchill's *The River War*; [suppressing](#) the ethnic and religious identities of criminal suspects, as the Germans did after the New Year's Eve assaults in Cologne, and not making available public statistics on sexual crimes; [prosecuting](#) for "hate speech" citizens who publicly criticize migrants; [banning](#) sexually suggestive billboards and advising women to avoid miniskirts, bikinis, and other revealing clothing; and tolerating extremist mosques and *madrassas* like those in the [Manchester area](#) that teach jihadist martyrdom and anti-Semitism.

Cultural and educational institutions similarly bow to pressure from Islamic groups over art exhibits, museum shows, theatrical performances, and school curricula, dress codes, and cafeteria menus. So it is that Europeans censor themselves and violate Western canons of free and open speech and artistic

expression. The Gatestone Institute's Giulio Meotti, for example, [documents](#) instances where organizers of exhibits with Muslim themes or images have caved in to protests from Islamic groups and shut down shows and exhibits: in Maastricht, birthplace of the E.U.; at the Tate Gallery and Victoria and Albert museum in London; the Cultures of the World museum in Sweden; The Hergé Museum in Louvain, Belgium, which had planned an exhibition paying tribute to the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists murdered in a jihadist terror attack; and a whole section of Paris' Louvre Museum dedicated to Eastern Christians, currently suffering a genocidal jihad in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Paris is building a \$20 million bullet-proof glass wall around the Eiffel Tower to protect it from possible terrorist attacks, while

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has [declared](#) that she will not put a limit on “refugees” granted asylum in Germany. This official appeasement and hypocrisy feed the anger and resentment of ordinary Europeans, who for years have been living with the wages of allowing large, unvetted numbers of ethnically, religiously, and culturally different peoples to settle in Europe.

All these problems of Muslim immigration reflect more than just intercultural misunderstandings or a failure of assimilation. For modern jihadist theorists, immigration into Europe has long been an explicit tactic for a slow-motion jihadist conquest in “stages.” Higher birth-rates of Muslim immigrants have also been seen as a weapon for transforming Europe, where today the average Muslim woman is ten years younger, and has 2.1 children

compared to Christians' 1.6. Moreover, in 2015, for the first time in modern history the European population [declined](#), with 5.1 million births compared to 5.2 million deaths. According to [Pew Research Center](#), by 2050, Europe's population will have declined by 99.2 million, while the Muslim population will have increased by 27.4 million.

If these trends continue, they will fulfill the alleged prophecy of Algerian president Houari Boumédiène, who in 1974 said, "One day millions of men will leave" the south for Europe, "not as friends" but "to conquer, and they will conquer by populating Europe" with their children. "Victory will come to us from the wombs of our women."³ Forty years later, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan similarly [told](#) Muslim women in Europe, "Have not just three

³ In Oriana Fallaci, *The Force of Reason* (New York, 2004), 56.

but five children. You are the future of Europe.” This tactic, called *hijrah* after Mohammed’s migration to Medina in 622 A.D.—along with the spread of sharia courts distinct from national judiciaries, and the belief among jihadist theorists that [welfare transfers](#) constitute *jizya*, the divinely sanctioned payments infidels owe to Muslims—shows that for modern jihadists, Europe’s destiny is to become Islamic by infiltration and piecemeal Islamization, as well as by demoralizing terrorist attacks.

The flow of Middle Eastern migrants has abated for now, but the problems of immigration persist. German security services are [projecting](#) a new mass influx in migrants in the last months of 2017, using the supposedly closed Balkan route. And more [migrants](#) are coming from jihadist-infested Libya—97,000 have reached Italy, the point of entry

for Mediterranean countries, so far just this year. New migration routes are developing from Morocco to [Spain](#), providing safer access for the families of migrants already in Europe. Continued migration means that Eurosceptic political parties—thought to have been tamed by the recent rejection of anti-immigrant populist parties in Austria, France, and the Netherlands—may revive with this latest influx and all the costs and social disruptions that follow. And despite recent [polls](#) showing that a majority of Europeans approve of the E.U. and its management of the economy, two-thirds disapprove of its handling of the migrant crisis, nearly three-quarters prefer that their own countries set immigration policies, and 59% [believe](#) that letting in more refugees will increase terrorism.

The current relief over the electoral rejection of anti-immigrant parties, and a seeming renewed faith in the E.U. suggest to its champions that perhaps it has weathered the nationalist forces that resulted in the Brexit vote. But continued migration, particularly from Muslim countries, and more terrorist attacks from self-radicalized jihadists or migrant sleeper-cells, could end the honeymoon. More countries may demand referenda on remaining in the E.U., and populist-nationalist parties may see their fortunes change. The challenges to the “undivided and indivisible union” are not likely to go away.

The E.U.'s Fatal Flaw

The problems outlined above are merely the symptoms of the flawed ideas that lie behind the whole E.U. project. The dream of European unification embodied

in the E.U. is based on the assumption that nationalism is a premodern relic and dangerously irrational. The evils wrought by Nazism's and fascism's "blood and soil" ethno-nationalism supposedly proved that exclusionary national identities hinder what for nearly two centuries has been the dream of the West: All humans share not just the potential, but an innate preference for the same Western goods such as leisure, affluence, individual rights, freedom, and peaceful coexistence. And since all humans are "plastic," they can, with the right social-political order, be shaped and improved in order to achieve Western ideals like human rights, confessional tolerance, and political freedom. The result of such transnational government would be a global order enjoying prosperity, social justice, and "perpetual peace," as Immanuel Kant's influential 1795 essay was titled. Only the irrational

passions of nationalist bitter-enders and backward people of faith are preventing the realization of this ideal.

Thus the sovereign European nation-states should cede much of their authority to the E.U.: a transnational, secular institution staffed by technocrats who will achieve peace and prosperity by practicing what French political philosopher Chantal Delsol calls “techno-politics,” a mode of governing through rational techniques and policies wielded by “experts” working in government agencies and bureaus. Such a technocracy is superior to the irrational passions and exclusionary superstitions that lie behind a “blinkered nationalism,” as Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni [called](#) it, and its parochial politics. This utopian antidemocratic vision was summarized in a March 2017 [speech](#) by E.U. Commission President Jean-Claude

Juncker: “The future of Europe cannot be held hostage by electoral cycles, party politics or short-term wins . . . Brexit—however regrettable and painful it may be—will not be able to stop the EU on its march towards its future . . . Europe is more than markets, goods and money. The single market and the euro area are not ends in themselves. They have to serve man . . . We cannot allow the people who defend these values—which I wish were universal—to be drowned out by loud nationalistic slogans which use patriotism as a weapon against others.”

As French political philosopher Pierre Manent has argued, however, this characterization of nationalism and national identity is tendentious and ideologically skewed towards a naïve universalism and secular materialism. And it ignores how democracy came to the West in the first place. Modern

democracy first arose in European nation-states as a way of uniting a particularly defined group of people into a “political community,” as Manent writes, an identity that “joined the immemorial past with the indefinite future.” Creating this “political community” was the achievement of the democratic nation-state: “The sovereign state and representative government are the two great artifices that have allowed us to accommodate huge masses of human beings within an order of civilization and liberty.” This national community became the grounds of political “consent,” the democratic institutions through which citizens participate in determining how their lives are run, their national identities expressed and protected, and collective aims pursued.

But today, Manent continues, “the state is less and less sovereign,

and government is less and less representative,” a condition obvious in the transnational, centralized, and intrusive E.U. bureaucracy and its coercive regulatory regime. The result is a “paralyzing disproportion between the weakness at the heart of our political communities and the enormity of their instruments.” What is missing is the political meaning of democracy, “the self-government of a people,” its place taken by “enlightened despotism,” the “sum of agencies, administrations, courts of justice, and commissions that lay down the law—or, better, rules—for us more and more meticulously.” That is, the E.U., which by demonizing all nationalisms because of the excesses of deformed ones like fascism and Nazism, has justified both the increasing concentration of power at the expense of democratic consent, and the marginalization of the particular

identities of individual European states comprising various cultures, mores, religions, traditions, histories, and folkways.⁴

Another important factor in weakening Europe's historical identities is the decline of faith in Christianity evident across Europe. The philosophical infrastructure of the West was built by the Christian faith, which synthesized the civilizations of Greece, Rome, and Jerusalem and created the goods we all prize: the separation of church and state, the importance of rationalism in human life, the value of the individual, equality, and "peace, freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law," as the E.U. bragged during the anniversary celebration in Rome. And it was in the name of Christ that Europeans battled for more than a millennium against the

⁴ In *Democracy Without Nations?* Trans. Paul Seaton (Wilmington, DE, 2007), 33, 9, 33, 40-41.

brutal invasions and occupations of their lands by the armies of Allah, a collective experience that helped solidify European identity.

Today, however, large numbers of Europeans, particularly the elites who have benefitted the most from the E.U.'s technocratic order, have forgotten God, and public culture has become "Christophobic." "Frequent" [Church attendance](#) averages half the 60% reported for the U.S., and the numbers of [Europeans](#) who believe that "religion is very important in their lives" averages less than half the 53% of Americans who answer yes. Even in traditional Catholic countries like Ireland, France, Poland, and Spain, church attendance has been steadily declining. In Oxford's [Public Opinion Quarterly](#) summary of global church attendance trends, only one of the 27 E.U. states, Romania, is not listed

under “low and stable” or “declining.” The number of self-identified Christians is declining as well. Between 2010 and 2015, according to [Pew Research Center](#), in Europe Christian deaths outnumbered births by six million people. For European Muslims, who on average are six years younger than Europeans, births outnumbered deaths by 2.3 million. Unsurprisingly, then, many of Europe’s famed churches and cathedrals are nearly empty on Sunday mornings, and tourists outnumber worshippers. And those who do attend are older and rural.

The decline of Christianity is reflected as well in the public culture and spaces of Europe, in which Islam seems to be the one faith allowed in the public square and protected by “hate speech” laws. The E.U. itself views faith, particularly Christianity, with suspicion, and views Christians as “shamans and

witch doctors from savage tribes whom one humors until one can dress them in trousers and send them to school,” as Polish poet Czesław Miłosz described arrogant secularism.⁵

This dislike of faith was evident in the E.U.’s refusal to acknowledge Europe’s Christian roots in the preamble to the European Constitution, a request some E.U. ministers characterized as a “huge mistake,” “absurd,” and a “joke.”⁶ As Pope Benedict XVI said at the time, this refusal to acknowledge Europe’s Christian foundations was “the expression of a consciousness that would like to see God eradicated once and for all from the public life of humanity and shut up in the subjective sphere of cultural residues from the

⁵ *The Captive Mind*, trans. Jane Zielonko (1955; New York, 1990), 73.

⁶ In George Weigel, *The Cube and the Cathedral* (New York, 2005), 58-59

past.”⁷ Faith and its traditions represent too powerful a counterforce to the centralized authority of the E.U., which like all tyrants seeks to marginalize any other authority over the people than its own.

The result of the marginalizing of faith and patriotism has been a lack of any unifying identity and set of values, beliefs, principles, and collective goods to which all these unique, various national identities can assent. Thus people default to their traditional religious and national identities that are more representative of their daily lives and associations, a process that weakens the “closer union” of E.U. states. The only alternatives to faith and nation that the E.U. can offer are a “vague internationalism, a squalid materialism, and the promise of impossible Utopias,” as Winston

⁷ In *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* (San Francisco, 2005), 44-45

Churchill said in 1933 of England's self-loathing intellectuals.

In our day, we can add to the list the continuing attraction of socialism and redistributionist economies; a noble-savage multiculturalism that exalts non-Western cultures no matter how dysfunctional and illiberal, at the same time as Westerners practice a fashionable “unwarranted self-abasement,” as Churchill called it in the same speech; and a *dolce vita* hedonism and “squalid materialism” that privilege present comfort and pleasure over the future of one's country—cultural pathologies evident in the failure to have children, the near disappearance of God from the public square, a flabby pacifism, and the suicidal appeasement of Muslim immigrants who despise the West and seek its destruction.

The malaise and discontent so evident in Europe today in part reflect the contempt and denigration of national identities and the Christian faith heaped on ordinary Europeans by the technocratic elites in Brussels and Strasbourg. But this arrogant assault on ordinary people's fundamental identity leaves them adrift. As French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut has written, "It is inhuman to define man by blood and soil but no less inhuman to leave him stumbling through life with the terrestrial foundations of his existence taken from him."⁸ With Christianity, the cultural and political foundation of Europe, a ghost of its former self, and with public displays of patriotism and pride in one's own culture and way of life restricted to athletic events like the World Cup, the Olympics, and the Tour de France, what today can unify the European peoples,

⁸ *In the Name of Humanity*, trans. Judith Friedlander (1996; New York, 2000), 103.

or what else can provide the bonding solidarity of citizens, the affection for their fellows and shared way of life that motivates them to fight, kill, and die for their community?

The E.U. has no answer to these questions. No one will die for the E.U. flag, or a shorter work week, or a longer vacation, or afternoon adultery, or more porn on the Internet. And that lack of a unifying ideal worth dying for is why the Eurocrats have failed at their mission to create a united Europe whose economic power, cultural influence, and military resources would fulfill the boast of French president Jacques Chirac, who announced in 1995 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, “The bipolar world we have known is finished, and the world of tomorrow will be multipolar. One of these essential poles will be Europe.” On the contrary, Europe is fractured,

its transnational idealism shopworn, and its very reason for existing limited to enhancing the power and serving the interests of bigger and richer member states and political elites. The E.U., the government of Europe, is unlikely to survive in its current form, and at best will undergo reconfiguration into more culturally similar regional associations.

A Warning for America?

The American political order has for decades been undergoing a similar process of centralizing and concentrating power at the expense of the states' sovereignty and the citizens' autonomy. The result is a national debt approaching 100% of GDP, chronic budget deficits, entitlement programs approaching bankruptcy, and a regulatory regime clogging economic growth and intruding on private life and civil society. [Birthrates](#)

are at 1.81, a historic low, population growth coming from immigration. The U.S. hosts eleven million illegal aliens, a low estimate, many of them sheltered by “sanctuary” cities embracing a naïve cosmopolitanism. And a self-loathing multiculturalism idealizes the non-Western “other,” even as it demonizes the freest, most diverse culture in the world.

Though still more religious than Europe, Americans’ Christian beliefs and faith have also been declining into a vague “spirituality,” as progressives have been steadily silencing the voice and authority of religion in the public square. At the same time, they smear as “fascism” patriotism and national pride in American goodness and exceptionalism. Like the Eurocrats they admire, progressives prefer instead a vague “global” identity and multinational

political order in which the U.S. cedes some of its national sovereignty to transnational institutions, checks its international arrogance, atones for its historical sins, and as then Senator Barack Obama [wrote](#) in a 2007 *Foreign Affairs* article, participates in global affairs “in the spirit of a partner—a partner mindful of his own imperfections.” No wonder Europeans still [love](#) him.

The improbable election of Donald J. Trump, who ran on the promise to “make America great again,” so far has seemingly slowed down the program of Europeanizing America that progressives have pursued for decades. Trump’s unabashed embrace of patriotism and faith, pruning of the overweening regulatory state, reining in of federal agencies, restoration of controls on unfettered immigration, and appointment of an originalist to the

Supreme Court are all hopeful signs that we can avoid the fate of Europe. And in Poland he delivered a full-throated celebration of the West that rebuked the flabby cultural relativism that typifies the E.U. and American progressive elites, and validates their appeasing policies towards Islamic jihad.

But like the government of the E.U., the progressive “deep state” has burrowed deeply into the courts and government agencies, and along with their ideological allies in education, popular culture, and the media, are fighting to discredit Trump and block his policies. The battle to restore America’s unique character, political freedom, and national goodness—and to reject the model of E.U.’s failing utopia—has just begun.

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