

world gives books a chance to survive and flourish. Legutko's observations are brilliant, but as he continues his lecturing one begins to feel a scarcity of quotable data to support the argument. One feels that the argument is plausible, indeed correct, but the difference between scholarship and journalism consists in that scholars supply quotable sources for their discoveries. In the classroom or in journalism there is no time for data and just delivering the outline of an argument must suffice, but in a book that deals with fundamental issues in an often strikingly original way a certain amount of documentation, and therefore footnoting, makes the argument rock solid. Related to this lack of documentation is the lack of firm subdivisions in chapters. The impression that topics overlap one another often arises. Greater orderliness within chapters would have improved the book. Even without footnotes and bibliography, however, the book is one of the most profound probes into the woes of liberal democracy to date. One should be alarmed that this kind of book has appeared so late in the history of liberal democracies. Δ

Donald Trump's Warsaw Speech and the Nihilism of Modern Sophisticates Edwin Dyga

On 6 July 2017, US President Donald Trump stood before the Warsaw Uprising Monument on Krasiński Square (Plac Krasińskich) and reminded Europe—by extension, the Western world—of the choice facing its cultural and political elites in the early twenty-first century. That his message was delivered in Poland was both symbolic and telling; it constituted a warning and a call for the reassertion of those things that have defined our civilization by reference to the near-Sisyphean struggle of the Polish underground in the Second World War. The history of overwhelming odds, betrayal by alleged allies, and the brutalities of genocidal war set the scene for a Huntingtonian declaration for civilizational perseverance: “Because as the

Polish experience reminds us,” Trump stated, “the defence of the West ultimately rests not only on means but also on the will of its people to prevail,” adding that “the fundamental question of our time is whether the West has the will to survive” and specifically, whether “we have the desire and the courage to preserve our civilization in the face of those who would subvert and destroy it.” The partisans of the Warsaw Uprising understood the value of what they were fighting for in 1944, and Trump's words last month were an urgent reminder of the apocalyptic risks to the rest of the continent, should its leaders fail to unapologetically embrace and reaffirm their heritage in the political and cultural sphere. “We write symphonies. We strive for excellence, and cherish inspiring works of art that honor God . . . We put faith and family, not government and bureaucracy, at the center of our lives. Those are the priceless ties that bind us together as nations, as allies, and as a civilization.” Notably, these things can only be achieved by a confident people with a strong faith in their place in the world, and it is those two things, *confidence* and *faith*, of which Europe has suffered a chronic deficiency.

A people ceases to embody a civilization the moment their cultural assertiveness is numbed to the point where they can no longer distinguish the boundaries of their hearth or the framework of their identity. The process of collapse in Western Europe seems to have gathered considerable momentum over the last half decade, particularly with the aggressive demographic shifts that have tested the threshold of tolerance in ways unimaginable half a generation ago. Yet it seems difficult to imagine a political solution to a problem that obviously runs deeper than mere disputes over the bureaucratic style of governance. The predictably pathological responses to the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester, London, and recently at the Cathedral of Our Lady in Paris, is emblematic of a spiritual crisis that has retarded the ability of a people to think clearly and act with conviction. Instead of righteous anger at those who fostered the conditions for the violent spiral of decline, people one might expect to

have a vested interest in the survival of their culture and society turn their scorn upon those who object to the forces under which the edifice has begun to crumble. Consider the irrational opinions of *soi-disant* “children of the Enlightenment” who are heard with increasing frequency in debates about the “national question” or the culture war in the Old World. The most common is the belief that the present immigration crisis west of the Oder-Neisse line is part of some natural or evolutionary process, no different from the great migration of peoples across the isthmus of centuries past, and therefore intrinsically unremarkable and unobjectionable. What is declared to be natural therefore cannot be bad, so those who raise concerns about the effect of large scale demographic tides affecting Europe are met with bewilderment, often have their motivations questioned, and in extreme cases, their opinions censured or criminalized.

The overadjusted “nowhere men” of modernity are riddled with internal inconsistencies and cognitive dissonance. The mainstream commentariate’s incongruous reaction to the Finsbury Park attack—where a native Briton ploughed a van into a crowd of worshippers outside of a mosque infamous for its incubation of local jihadists—is a case in point. The fatal consequence of political modernity’s inherent contradictions is the ideologically driven refusal to see obvious cause and effect between existing policies and the resulting moral anarchy and social decay. The narrative never changes: the core assumptions on which current policy rests are never questioned; instead, their failure is interpreted as proof of the need for their more vigorous application. This evident resignation to catastrophe betrays an underlying suicidal belief in the inevitable death of a civilization that is also implicitly (and ironically) touted in liberal discourse as the alleged peak of cultural achievement: talk of imminent Western eclipse *and* end-of-history triumphalism will therefore emanate from the same postmodern mind. Thus, the Janus-headed idol of contemporary liberalism. On the right is the expectation that the rest of the world either wish to, or should, mimic the secularized and deracinated norms of

contemporary consumerist Americanism; here the *particular* is replaced with the *contingent* or *undefinable abstract*: people and homeland are supplanted by hyper individualism and increasingly vacuous notions of freedom. On the left, we witness the contradictory belief that foreign cultures differ from our own only in trivial outwardly ways and are therefore essentially fungible, or are so fundamentally different that they can and should enrich our own; here the implicit message is to sever any special affinity one might have with one’s now-unfashionable patrimony.

For both these positions, the only things worthy of affirmation are ephemeral and fleeting concepts such as values or the constitution, both interpreted through either a libertarian or libertine moral lens. Summarized with the slogan *invade the world, invite the world*, these two positions have formed the policy platform of most major Western global powers in the post-1960s era, *mutatis mutandis*—the difference being mainly in the emphasis placed on *invading* or *inviting*, never interrogating the merits of either. Add the masochist tendencies of cultural Marxism with establishment conservatism’s thoughtless impulse to preserve yesteryear’s progressive vanguard, and the combined effect is an ideological cocktail that mocks, slanders and denigrates Christianity, delegitimizes Occidental traditions, reflexively embraces the Other in public discourse, and ultimately leads to national autoerasure, societal balkanization, and cultural implosion. Both of these worldviews will lead to the overthrow of the liberal order that gave rise to them, yet these distinctions of little difference define the two seemingly opposing wings of the political spectrum: from today’s shallow conservatism to the banality of modern progress. The terrorist attack in Manchester therefore takes on added significance as the UK’s Charlie Hebdo. Its Ouroboros-like qualities can be summarized thus: an assault against an expression of a culture that is responsible for its own vulnerability at the hands of a threat it has welcomed to its bosom. Press and political elites no longer have the intellectual honesty to assess the situation without routinely relying on mendacious spin. What follows is a

recrudescence towards barbarism at the great expense of civil society: thus Darren Osborne plays the role of Britain's Fjotolf Hansen. The lesson here is that external danger can often awaken domestic demons from their slumber; a responsible government might do better to apply policies that prevent fostering the conditions for anarcho-tyranny, rather than leading directly into its crucible of destruction and dealing with the problem there. The melees witnessed in the streets of Hamburg during the recent G20 summit recall both the rioters of '68, and '38 before them: over time, a moral bankruptcy of the political class will create the conditions for an accelerated self-destruction that can only be controlled through mechanisms that entrench tyranny.

Whatever one may think about the plight of those who claim to be or are described as refugees by the left-leaning commentariat, the sheer scale and magnitude of their influx into Europe since at least late 2015 cannot reasonably be called evolutionary or natural. It would be wilfully reckless to suggest that their presence will not significantly disturb the equilibrium of the indigenous inhabitants' quality of life, their economic order, and the nature of representative democracy itself. *Revolutionary* is a more appropriate descriptor of the impact this process will undoubtedly have on Europe's native culture, but more immediately, its politics. Yet the Gnostic spectators who are content to watch their forefathers' civilizational achievements be squandered—as they shrug and shake their heads in mocking concern—do not seem to ascribe the same sense of evolutionary inevitability to the rise of political reaction in the nations of the Danube and Vistula basins. Instead, the resurgence of unashamed political localism among the Visegrád Group, and particularly in Poland and Hungary, is perceived as an anomaly requiring correction. Opposed as they are to the utopian programs of the progressive *bonhommes* of Berlin and Brussels, the governments of Warsaw and Budapest are declared to be on the wrong side of history and denounced accordingly. Despite the pressure of their relentless Western critics, this neo-

sovereignist current in Central Europe has asserted principles which only a generation ago may have been thought of as simply common sense. Were reason to truly reign supreme in the parliaments and salons of the EU's founding member states, it would be readily evident that the present mess is a direct result of deliberate policy. The inability to acknowledge this is, however, unsurprising, especially since it would require a further confession of either terminal malice or chronic incompetence. Yet harsh words and even threats of sanctions are reserved for those who refuse to follow the suicidal altruists of the Franco-German régime, one which has shown more interest in centralizing the military might of the continent under a bankrupt Bundeswehr, or placing the continental public service in the hands of progressive-endorsed graduates from the Grandes Écoles, than actually protecting its frontier from breach or infiltration.

While it may be tempting to believe these “nowhere men” are therefore mindless, *soulless* is perhaps a better indictment. They believe nothing, or rather, they would believe anything that permits them to see all human activity as determined outside the realm of human moral agency. Absolution for negligence or thoughtlessness is thus necessarily coded into their mental framework. If all human tragedies are inevitable and therefore natural or part of cosmic progress, opposition can be safely and conveniently excluded from the polite society of conformist nihilism. The cultural and political dissidents of today will interpret this as transnational liberalism's underlying self-hatred, one that constitutes a far greater threat to European nations than any overt military invasion could ever hope to be. As an ideological autoimmune deficiency syndrome, it makes defence in the political arena practically impossible. But such lessons are lost on the modern sophisticate who fails to appreciate that choice means the ability to draw moral distinctions and make appropriate rational determinations between right and wrong. Unsurprisingly, she therefore forgets that history is made by men who have the courage to shape their destiny instead of being carried by the

prevailing winds, or the culture of endemic passivity and acquiescence that dominates today's respectable ways of thinking. The cotemporary political intelligentsia, a misnomer if ever there were one, have simply chosen not to choose, slavishly embracing whatever reward awaits them for the abdication of their own agency. Tragically, they are unlikely to consider the Warsaw Speech with the urgency and seriousness it demands even if it ultimately serves to defend their freedom, simply because its politics offends their naïve conceits. The rot runs deep: we even witness entire Christian denominations denouncing the defenders of a heritage without which they would not exist, as heretics and sinners, because the necessary defence is seen as a repudiation of a secularized globalist universalism. That this universalism is completely antithetical to traditional Christian theology does not register in their minds because the affirmation of utopian ideas requires the negation of everything that is particular. A logical consequence sees Christian charity deform into Babelist idolatry under the banner of compassion.

This nihilism of modern sophisticates means that their future will naturally be determined by those who have no qualms aggressively occupying the cultural and spiritual vacuum of an emasculated postmodernity and its political and therefore territorial space. What is witnessed in Western Europe, or indeed the United States, is a living testament to the fruit of a "progress" deemed inevitable only to the extent that collective delusion or stupidity is itself inevitable. Unfortunately, delusion and stupidity appears to be an ineradicable blight on the elite leadership of Western nations, rewarded as it appears to be by a system that militates in favor of a collective lowest common denominator. But nothing is inevitable, only thinking makes it so. The triumphs of Brexit, the successful presidential campaign of Donald Trump, and before them the toppling of rebranded postcommunism by Viktor Orbán and Jarosław Kaczyński have shown this beyond doubt. Yet the longer our civilization journeys down its present path, the more uncomfortable will be the solutions to the dilemma it has recklessly strayed into. What

must be remembered is this: solutions are deemed impossible only until the inconceivable is achieved for the first time; and the extent to which solutions are perceived as inconceivable will determine just how much we value what is being lost and how committed we are to reclaim it. President Trump was therefore ominously correct in suggesting that the question we face today is whether or not we as a civilization have the desire or will to survive. The genuine free thinkers of the coming decades will be those who can exercise their moral choice in favor of their posterity without fear of risking their opponent's opprobrium. In other words, those who will take charge of their own future instead of being led along the currents of annihilation, hypnotically chanting the sutras of oblivion and collective self-denial. In his Warsaw Speech Trump drew on the Polish partisan underground's commitment to prevail when declaring that we too will triumph in the face of aggressive barbarism and militant nihilism. Who embodies the future of Europe, Martyn Hett or Michał Cywiński? One of these two held all the right opinions, and is dead. The other is hated by transnational elites, but lives and has inspired a generation. This is where the fault lines of the present war are drawn, and there has never been a more pressing time for men of good will to pick a side. Δ

LETTERS

To the Editor:

I wonder if you would permit me to respond to a few of the inaccurate characterizations of my book *A Kaleidoscope of Poland*, which was reviewed in *The Sarmatian Review* by Professor James S. Pula (vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 2042-3).

Despite Professor Pula's claims to the contrary, I do go into quite some detail as to the rationale underlying the choice of headings in the *Kaleidoscope*. The book is a collection of Polish cultural-historical topoi, which any moderately educated person in Poland takes for granted and often uses as a shorthand means of communicating with other Poles, but which are a mystification to a non-Polish visitor to the country. Accordingly, as is explained in the introduction (which I gather Pula did