

DIVISIONS WITHIN EUROPE, THE CRISIS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Winston Churchill, in his famous 5 March 1946 speech at Fulton, in the United States, said the following: “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe.”

Churchill’s words sounded shocking at the time, for his peers did not yet fully understand the trajectory of the processes that would follow the Second World War. Yet the British statesman’s prophecy held true. The Iron Curtain became a symbol of the Cold War era: both an abstract and concrete manifestation of the division of Europe. In a political sense, Europe was divided. Its western half, supported by the United States, began moving towards democracy, a market economy and the welfare state, while its eastern half – or, rather, its central and eastern part – fell under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Union. There, the Soviet empire forced the states of Central and Eastern Europe to implement a socialist-communist “planned economy,” subordinating individual interests to communist public interest.

This extreme division bisected Europe decisively, and did so above all politically, militarily and economically. So the Iron Curtain came down across the middle of Europe – even through the heart of Berlin, at the Brandenburg Gate –, but this did not mean that the continent had been torn apart culturally.

For it is a fact that Western Europe continued to hold on to its traditions embodied by ancient Greek and Roman sciences and culture; by its legal system; by Christian moral teachings and the principle of equality among men; by the emergence of the middle class starting in the 17th and 18th centuries; by national sovereignty; by the democratic rule of law; and by human and civic rights. While the two wars caused a disruption, and fascism and Nazism upended the western order, after the Second World War – by the mercy of history – these countries were able to stand up and return to their traditions: classical and modern, civic and democratic. In enabling them to do so, the United States – the greatest winner of the war – played a major role. At that time and place, the United States very much needed a smoothly operating, successful and democratic Western Europe, one that could counterbalance the model of the Soviet Empire and demonstrate that the West was superior to the East in

every way. These are the facts. Irrespective, it is also true that Western Europe – which at the time was taken to include Northern and Southern Europe – created welfare states which brought about a golden age for this region, lasting from the fifties until roughly the turn of the millennium.

At the same time, it is also a fact that the nations of Central Europe, forced to live under the Bolshevik-type of communism on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, never forgot and never renounced their European traditions. In fact, secretly, in hiding and in their private lives, they always yearned for the Western European model, whose existence they knew about, even if it was only on the rarest of occasions that they could witness it for themselves. Because the communist-socialist dictatorship had essentially done away with individual liberty and the kind of civil society where individual liberty could flourish, the preservation of European traditions fell to the realm of the family. It was there that it was able to survive to some extent, sustaining hope that one day the era of communism would come to an end, allowing us to return to our European roots. While Prague, Warsaw and Budapest may have done a more vibrant job of protecting traditions than, say, Bucharest, Sofia or Tirana – since being Central European has always been qualitatively different than being Eastern European or the spirit of the Balkans –, the desire to break free from dictatorship was present throughout the entire region. This was proven with perfect clarity by the events after 1989 in each of these countries.

What was it, then, that the oppressed citizens of Central and Eastern European countries were so carefully guarding in their private lives? A sense of their nation; Christianity, or at least Christian values; a desire for freedom; middle-class welfare and a middle-class family model; spontaneous and grass-roots social life; and a desire for the “small circles of freedom” (Bibó). A way of life, traditions, norms and ways of behaving. Or, in other words, culture, civil courage and civil sovereignty.

It was this connection, this bond, which was broken after the turn of the millennium.

In Western Europe, and in general in the West, a new type of messianic neo-liberal attitude began to take shape starting in the sixties and seventies, maintaining that the values, traditions and customs which until then had made the West what it was were now worthless and useless, for they stand in the way of the individual attaining complete freedom. Individuals must be freed of all inherited bonds, traditions and institutions, so that they may decide freely who and what they wish to be. Because of this, there is no need for Christianity, and no need for a sense of nation; there is no need for centuries-old traditions,

and there is also no need for family. The goal is to deconstruct and dismantle these, thus breaking down all obstacles to individual freedom. The theoretical foundations for this were provided by Cultural Marxism as developed by the Frankfurt School. It was the generation of the so-called 68ers which was first impacted by this school of thought. They later went on to join the political elite of the European Union and its member states, and continue to be present there, shaping the fate of Europe – we need only think of Joschka Fischer, Barroso, Guy Verhofstadt, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and the others.

Those global – financial and political – circles, which have disseminated this new world view and perspective (gradually and then with increasing intensity and aggressiveness) in the Euro-Atlantic world, calling it neoliberalism, a free market, globalisation, etc., want to see the creation of a cosmopolitan global society in which individuals lose their traditional, community identities that have always protected them against complete submission to the will of any empire. These global circles are convinced that the world's crises can only be solved if people flounder between shifting identities, and will thus also subject themselves even to a global will far more easily – as they actually have nothing and no one to hold onto.

The outcome is plain to see: Unfortunately, Western Europe has indeed lost its very face that had made it so appealing to Central and Eastern Europe. For us, this is all incomprehensible and unacceptable. For them, however, it is incomprehensible that we cannot understand these changes. Why can't we catch up to the twenty-first century and to political correctness; how can we still believe in things like nation, family, religion, traditional sexuality or the state? They've moved past all of these.

I think, therefore, that as a result of a long and joyless process, another Iron Curtain has descended through the middle of Europe, from Warsaw to Ljubljana, from Prague to Sofia and from Vilnius to Belgrade. This time, however, it is not a political or a military Iron Curtain, but a cultural one. It is an Iron Curtain that was constructed despite the fact that we are all members of the same alliance of nations (the European Union); that we share a similar political and economic system; that we have similar institutions; and that we belong to the same military alliance, NATO. The new Iron Curtain was not created in institutions nor at the level of international alliances, but in the sense of perspectives, the structures of consciousness and in the soul. These, however, are far more important than institutions. Institutions are created by us, the people, and only function so long as we, the people, believe in them. A change always begins in hearts and minds, in thoughts and – more generally

– in culture. In Western Europe, this change has already taken place: Western Europe is not changing – it has already changed. Unfortunately, we have to conclude that Europe, in the traditional sense, has ceased to exist. Europe has become unravelled and has split apart.

There is, however, an important difference between the first – political and military – Iron Curtain and the second, cultural, divide. This difference lies in the fact that in the case of the former, we Central and Eastern Europeans ended up on the wrong side. But this time we have chosen the right side, and will continue to choose the right side.

Additionally, there is a divide between the Western European “mainstream” neoliberal elite and western citizens, and civil society. Relevant Hungarian and international – EU – public opinion polls have clearly shown that it is not only in Central and Eastern Europe that a significant portion of society rejects migration, the mixing of cultures, the spread of Islam in Europe and the concept of a super-federal, empirical United States of Europe (as represented primarily by the political elite in France and Germany): the same actually holds true in the societies of Western Europe as well. Public reactions to neoliberal, cosmopolitan and globalist politicians and governments are growing increasingly frequent: demonstrations, protests, actions of resistance by civil society groups – a prominent example of which has been the series of so-called yellow-vest demonstrations in Paris and other French cities. This shows that while in Central and Eastern Europe, it was not only civil society, but in many cases states and governments themselves which stood up in opposition to the globalist-liberal mainstream – represented most ardently by the current leaders of the EU. In Western Europe, a significant part of civil society has taken action against the politics of the liberal elite.

If we wanted to label this fissure which divides European politics, we could say that Western Europe is liberal, while Eastern Europe is conservative; or that the West is left-wing, while the “Centre and East” is right-wing – but these classifications are not quite accurate. What I would say instead is that the globalist, cosmopolitan political elite is in the west, while in the Central and Eastern areas, we have supporters of sovereignty, fearing for and guarding their national identity. Or, from another perspective, those building the European Union empire, the United States of Europe, stand in opposition to those calling for a loose confederation based on the independence of member states.

What is at stake in the coming years is no less than this: whether or not traditional, classical European culture and civilisation, tracing its roots to ancient Greek and Roman traditions and to the Christian religion, will survive,

or whether it will gradually be diluted in multiculturalism, with Europe becoming a mixed-race continent.

Or, to pose the question another way: the upcoming period will tell whether or not Oswald Spengler was right when he said that we are witnessing the decline of the West.

At first glance, it may seem like an exaggeration to say so. But if we stop and think about it, we see that Europe has not, for decades, been in as deep a crisis as it is today. These crises are catching up to one another, amplifying each other, and thereby threaten the future of Europe. Europe has thus come to a crossroads.

We often are content to speak only about migration when it comes to the crisis, yet we are in fact facing several types of crises at the same time, all connected to one another. If we examine them one by one, we will find that we can distinguish between at least four types of crises.

First: the economic and financial crisis. One reason for this is that the new member states of Central and Eastern Europe have not, by far, caught up to the level of developed Western European nations. No economic equalisation has taken place; instead, in Brussels they speak today of a two-speed Europe, which results in the creation of a first-class and a second-class Europe. The second reason is that the influence on the EU of global financial capital, as well as large international financial institutions and credit agencies etc., has reached a level where the governments of the member states are losing their sovereign decision-making rights. What happened to Italy and Greece should serve as warnings in this respect. As a result, the EU is moving away from economic integration and stabilisation, and heading towards fragmentation instead.

Second is the legitimacy crisis. The various European countries still possess unique identities. The EU, however, does not. In recent decades, the European Union has failed to develop a true EU ethos and a sense of unity and identity among European citizens; the Maastricht Treaty, the unsuccessful attempts at drafting an EU constitution, and the Treaty of Lisbon have all been failures in this regard. Today, the EU is no longer a community of values, but merely an imperfect community of interests. All relevant surveys show clearly, in black and white, that European citizens do not see the EU's institutions as their own, and continue to feel defined by their national identities. Because of this, and stemming from this, plans of the Brussels elite, along with the core countries of France and Germany, of forging a super-federal, empirical United States of Europe remain but a dream. From another perspective,

attempting to do so would amount to something forced upon the people of Europe from above, aggressively. Reality, then, is the preservation of national sovereignty and the operation of a looser federal system comprised of strong member states.

Third is the democratic crisis. Importantly, recent years have seen the Commission take charge within the EU, even though it is precisely the Commission which enjoys the lowest level of democratic empowerment compared to the Council or the Parliament. Meanwhile the Commission, with Jean-Claude Juncker at its helm, is in the hands of the global elite and mainstream neoliberal political and media powers, catering to its demands. Let us think only of George Soros's regular – almost weekly – visits with Juncker and their exchanges of kisses when they meet. But it is even more important that the European Council on Foreign Relations, founded by George Soros in 2007, includes among its members several leaders of the EU and the Commission – in this way, it has evolved into an almost “parallel” power alongside, or even above, the EU.

The Brussels elite often fails to take into consideration in its decision-making the opinions of member state governments, European citizens and civil society. In fact, its decisions run directly counter to the expectations of citizens, especially with regard to migration or the promotion of a federal Europe. The Civil Unity Forum (CÖF) has approached the Commission with countless proposals and petitions, but almost all of these have been swept off the table, or responded to with meaningless answers, thereby demonstrating that for the Commission, the opinions of certain civil society organisations do not mean a thing. More precisely: for the Brussels and Western European (primarily German, French, Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourg) neoliberal political elite, the only civil society organisations that matter are those whose activities support the globalist policies espoused by this elite, with a special focus on NGOs supporting migration, that consider migration to be a human right and use every means to support and promote the flow of migrants into Europe. This group includes those migrant-saving civilian ships cruising the Mediterranean (and often working together with human smuggling groups), as well as human rights organisations and those offering aid to migrants. It must be emphasised that the majority of these NGOs are supported by the Open Society Foundation, with George Soros – one of the defining characters of the global financial elite – in the background. George Soros, with his lobby groups, the European Council on Foreign Relations, (fake) civil society organisations and his comprehensive global network,

exerts significant influence on the functioning of the EU and in particular the European Commission and the Parliament.

Because of ideologically wholly one-sided support from the Commission, the Parliament and the Soros-affiliated global network, the public and European public opinion gets the impression that only neoliberal, globalist civil organisations exist and operate in the EU. A major challenge for the upcoming period will be to help civil society organisations in favour of national sovereignty and democracy, taking action against uncontrolled migration and defending the traditional European way of life and identity become visible on the European stage and have an impact on the processes of upcoming years. Let us keep in mind, as I have already mentioned, that the majority of the European civil sector does not at all share the views of the Brussels elite and the liberal civil NGO networks. To this end, CÖF has established the European Union Civil Collaboration Conference (EUCET), which aims to pool and institutionalise the activities of like-minded civil society organisations.

Additionally, it is obvious that the EU elite committed to the liberal mainstream is increasingly failing to respect the legal and ethical norms of democracy; a good example of this was the adoption of the Sargentini report condemning Hungary, when abstentions were simply not taken into consideration, thus “producing” the two-thirds necessary for its passage. Or take, for instance, the vote – also in the European Parliament – on simplified migrant visas: then, the left-liberal MEPs, who ended up a minority after the vote, were in an incredible turn of events able to force a repeat of the vote, resulting in the outcome they had hoped for. The Brussels bureaucracy, instead of “problematic” democratic processes, is increasingly relying on tools like the exertion of pressure, delegating, as well as informal politicking and decision-making, whose aim is to ensure that the liberal position comes out on top even if it is actually a minority either in the EU or in any member state.

Fourth, and finally: the cultural and migration crisis. These two crises are connected, for Western Europe and the leaders in Brussels do not take action against migration – and in fact support and encourage it – because they have broken with their own, dominant cultural traditions, and have instead turned towards “the others”: minorities, different religions and subcultures. Western Europe, thus, does not believe in its own culture: it has replaced it with multiculturalism, borderless and nationless global citizenry, and cosmopolitanism. As a result, Brussels and the UN, committed to the global elite, wish to see illegal migration accepted as a human right. Instead of stopping migration, it is working to organise and institutionalise it.

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In conclusion: Europe, and the European Union, are at a crossroads. In this search for direction, a defining role must be played by those governments, parties and civil organisations that seek to defend the traditional face of the continent, its way of life, traditions and morals, whereby it has set an example and provided direction for the entire world for centuries.

If Europe, and with it, its culture built on the teachings of Jesus Christ, are lost, and Oswald Spengler is proven correct, then it will not only mean the downfall of the peoples of Europe, but will have an impact on the future of all mankind.

Fortunately, however, history is never predetermined. There is always an alternative, and there is always manoeuvring room to shape the future. For this, we need the independence, courage and action of civil groups.