

The Strange Death of Europe
Douglas Murray

A sweeping assessment by a journalist with all the tools: sweeping historical knowledge, languages, and the luxury of travel

WHY THE EAST IS DIFFERENT

Yet all of this raises another question. Why is Eastern Europe so different? Why has its attitude throughout the migrant crisis, towards borders, national sovereignty, cultural cohesion and many other points besides been so wholly at odds with that of Western Europe? Throughout the crisis, as in the years before, it was unimaginable that a right-wing Western European leader would have said half of what a left-wing Eastern European leader would. From the summer of 2015 up to the present whatever the threats and imprecations from the German government and the European Commission, the Visegrad Group of Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic took a line entirely contrary to that of Angela Merkel and Brussels. They criticised the Chancellor's shortsightedness and they held firm in their refusal to take in migrant quotas dictated from Berlin and Brussels.

In January 2016, when the Swedish authorities, European Commission and others began publicly to acknowledge that the majority of the people they had taken in the previous year had no right to claim asylum in Europe, Jean-Claude Juncker continued to insist on the Commission's proposed quota system to share out the migrants between each country. Slovakia continued to refuse to have any part in what its government described as a 'nonsense' and 'complete fiasco'. While volunteering to add 300 guards to the Schengen area's external borders, they nevertheless continued to insist that they would not take in any quotas of migrants. The left-wing Slovakian Prime Minister, Robert Fico, said in despair, 'I feel that we in the EU are now committing ritual suicide and we're just looking on.'¹³ The other Visegrad countries held the same view as Fico. The difference from their Western European partners could not have been more stark. What was it that made the East and West of the same continent think so differently on such central issues?

Chantal Delsol noticed the seeds of this difference in the mid-1990s. Spending time in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall, she saw that Eastern Europeans 'increasingly considered us as creatures from another planet, even while at a different level they dreamed of becoming like us. I later became convinced that it was in these eastern European societies that I should seek some answers to our questions ... the divergences between us and them led me to the belief that the last fifty years of good fortune had entirely erased our sense of the tragic dimension of life'.¹⁴ That tragic dimension of life had not been erased in the East. And nowhere have the consequences of this been more clearly displayed than in the attitudes of Eastern Europe's leaders, with the support of their publics, to the migration crisis.

All these countries wished to join the European Union and all wanted the greatest possible integration of European countries, with free movement and all the economic benefits that membership entailed. But when Chancellor Merkel opened up the external borders of Europe all of these countries rebelled – and not just rebelled but made a stand. On 15 March 2016 the Prime Minister of Hungary used his ceremonial speech for the National Holiday to explain the East's wholly different approach to migration, borders, culture and identity. Viktor Orbán told the people of Hungary that the new enemies of freedom were different from the imperial and Soviet systems of the past, that today they did not get bombarded or imprisoned, but merely threatened and blackmailed. But 'the peoples of Europe may have finally understood that their future is at stake,' he said:

At last, the peoples of Europe, who have been slumbering in abundance and prosperity, have understood that the principles of life that Europe has been built on are in mortal danger. Europe is the community of Christian, free, and independent nations; equality of men and women; fair competition and solidarity; pride and humility; justice and mercy. This time the danger is not attacking us the way wars and natural disasters do, suddenly pulling the rug from under our feet. Mass migration is a slow stream of water persistently eroding the shores. It is masquerading as a humanitarian cause, but its true nature is the occupation of territory. And what is gaining territory for them is losing territory for us.

Flocks of obsessed human rights defenders feel the overwhelming urge to reprimand us and to make allegations against us. Allegedly we are hostile xenophobes, but the truth is that the history of our nation is also one of inclusion, and the history of intertwining of cultures. Those who have sought to come here as new family members, as allies, or as displaced persons fearing for their lives, have been let in to make a new home for themselves. But those who have come here with the intention of changing our country, shaping our nation in their own image, those who have come with violence and against our will have always been met with resistance.

For the most powerful country in Europe this vision from Hungary could not be accepted. It stood not just in opposition to the policy of the German government of the day, but of each German government's immigration policies since the Second World War. The pressure from Berlin was unrelenting. Yet the irreconcilably different outlooks between East and West remained. That May, just a month before his country took over the Presidency of the European Union, Robert Fico, defended Slovakia's refusal to take in quotas of migrants as dictated by Brussels and Berlin. Despite the threat of huge fines for every migrant not taken, the Slovakian Prime Minister dug in: 'Islam has no place in Slovakia', he said. Migrants change the character of our country. We do not want the character of this country to change.'¹⁵

These countries had drunk from the same wells as the Western European countries for most of their histories, yet a different attitude had clearly settled here. Perhaps they did not feel or otherwise had not absorbed the guilt of Western Europe and did not think that all the faults of the world could be attributed to them. Or perhaps they had not suffered the enervation and tiredness that had afflicted the Western European countries. Or perhaps, having had no mass immigration during the post-war period (despite having much else), they had retained a sense of national cohesion that the Western Europeans were struggling to imagine or remember. Perhaps they were looking at what was happening in Western Europe and simply decided that they did not want the same things to happen in their countries.

Perhaps it was all of these things. And perhaps underlying them was the fact that the Visegrad countries had suffered the effects of Western torpor once before. Certainly they alone of the European nations had within living memory all experienced the tragic dimensions of life that their Western allies had forgotten. They knew that everything they had could be swept away from one direction and then just as easily swept away from another: that history does not give any people time off even when they feel they deserve it.

Meantime the rest of the continent remained as much prisoners of history as ever. By the summer of 2016 the Austrian and French authorities had tried to shut their borders to further waves of migrants coming up through Italy from their arrival points on Lampedusa and Sicily. As these restrictions came in, more migrants intent on heading north began to resort to the Swiss option. During the winter these mountainous passes can be lethal, though during the summer the remote, thin trails across the Italian-Swiss border are passable. That summer the Italian paper *La Stampa* spoke to locals in the village of Dumenza that lies between Lake Maggiore and the Swiss border. They noted the trails that were being used, and one old local commented in passing, 'These are the same paths that Italian Jews used to flee during the war.'¹⁶

To think about the migrants was to think about the migrants before. To consider those heading these ways into Germany was to think of those migrants heading the other way once before. To think about the migrants of today was to think about the Jews of yesterday: a pass that cannot be avoided.

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[[ASIN:1881780074 The Camp of the Saints]]

[[ASIN:1250097347 Submission: A Novel]]

[[ASIN:0143127160 A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History]]

[[ASIN:0465020429 The 10,000 Year Explosion: How Civilization Accelerated Human Evolution]]

[[ASIN:1593680244 IQ and Global Inequality]]

[[ASIN:B009S2LKLY La France orange mécanique]]

[[ASIN:3421044309 Deutschland schafft sich ab]]

[[ASIN:0743289692 Infidel]]

Murray frames the moral dilemma facing the west through a quote from the prophetic 1973 book [[ASIN:1881780074 The Camp of the Saints]]. Author Jean Raspail saw 'A million poor wretches, armed only with their weakness and their numbers, overwhelmed by misery, encumbered with starving brown and black children, ready to disembark on our soil, the vanguard of the multitudes pressing hard against every part of the tired and overfed West. I literally saw them, saw the major problem they presented, a problem absolutely insoluble by our present moral standards. To let them in would destroy us. To reject them would destroy them.'

An established journalist, Murray had the resources to travel throughout Europe to view the immigration problem firsthand. He spoke to immigrants on the island of Lesbos, the slums of Malmö, the streets of Paris. He thoroughly appreciates their motives in coming to Europe and in the early chapters appears convinced that the majority of them have no motive other than to improve their lives.

Later chapters, the bulk of the book, go into extensive detail about the Islamic immigrants. They do not want to integrate. They have no respect for the host cultures. They are given to crime, especially rape. Their parts of the major cities – Paris, Stockholm, Berlin – become no-go zones for police, firemen and ambulances. They institute Sharia law among themselves and reject the host countries' law. Many other authors have described what he saw in [[ASIN:B009S2LKLY France]], [[ASIN:3421044309 Germany]], [[ASIN:0743289692 Holland]] and [[ASIN:1484873831 Sweden]].

A larger question than why the Muslims behave as they do is why Europeans allow it to happen. Murray recites the well-known history of strife between Islam and Christianity, from Charles Martel's victory at Tours in 732 through the 1683 defeat of the Ottomans at Vienna. Islam is a known enemy of Christianity. Why are they allowed?

Politicians give a number of excuses for admitting refugees. Europe is not having enough children to fill the workplaces. Diversity makes society more enjoyable. More workers make for a richer country. It is not practical to keep them out.

European values demand that all comers be treated humanely. Murray assesses and dismisses each argument in turn. Then he turns to a core thesis. Europe is simply tired. European philosophy and culture crested at the end of the 19th century. It had nowhere to go except nihilism and hedonism, and those are the paths it has chosen. Europe is allowing the Muslims to take over because it hasn't the strength to defend itself, and does not believe it has anything worth defending. Murray's arguments are well made, and his knowledge of European history, philosophy and literature are impressive.

The argument is encapsulated in his treatment of Michel Houellebecq's novel [\[\[ASIN:1250097347 Submission\]\]](#), about the coming to power of an Islamist government in France. The book was widely condemned both by Muslims and by mainstream politicians fearful of same. Europe has given up on freedom of speech when it comes to Islam. Too many events have shown that it is too dangerous.

It is the politicians who are especially cowardly. The people by and large, and in increasing numbers, don't want widespread Muslim immigration. Yet the politicians keep the doors open and keep telling saccharine stories about how wonderful it all is. The common man is able to contrast the stories with everyday reality and conclude that they are lying.

Here we come to some points that Murray could explore further. There are huge contradictions between a Sharia law society and modern liberalism. Treatment of women and homosexuals would top the list. Yet, liberals continue to push for open borders. He notes cases such as that of Pym Fortuyn in the Netherlands in which liberals came to oppose immigration (and, too often, to die for taking such a stance). He notes that Jews have been driven from historical Jewish quarters and are very often victims of attacks by Muslims. He does not whatsoever go into the question of who owns the media that covers up Muslim crime and broadcasts the message of diversity. He mentions Soros a few times, but fails to note that Soros is only the most prominent of many.

Genetics is another topic that deserves more attention. Murray would credit the differences between the immigrants and the host populations as purely cultural. Liberals believe the same, and fervently hope that in a few generations the immigrants will become indistinguishable from the host populations. Findings by scientists in [\[\[ASIN:0143127160 genetics\]\]](#), [\[\[ASIN:0465020429 evolution\]\]](#) and [\[\[ASIN:1593680244 intelligence\]\]](#) give the lie to these happy dreams. The populations are genetically different. They took thousands of years to evolve traits that enable them to optimally fill the niches they do. To survive in a harsh climate, bands of Northern Europeans developed altruism, tolerance and high intelligence. Said altruism has them project these traits onto others and welcome them into the society.

Murray's last two chapters are satisfying summations: what might have been, and what will be. Most authors contrive a happy ending to a book like this. Murray does not. He envisions a Western Europe in which pockets of traditional people muddle through in small concentrations far from the cities. I myself emigrated to Ukraine, the other side of the Viasgrad countries. Though it is certainly beset with problems of its own, there is very little immigration. Not enough economically to entice anybody, and no historical guilt to impel the natives to accept refugees. Last year the town of Yagotin, not far from Kyiv, forced Ukraine's president to go back on a plan to resettle 250 Syrians in their midst. There were no cries of anguish from liberals.

There is hope for Western Europe. The millennial generation is waking up. One of the most heartening books I've seen recently is [\[\[ASIN:1907166416 Generation Identity\]\]](#), translated into most European languages. Young Europeans are once again getting a sense of themselves and finding some purpose in life. They recognize that unchecked immigration is antithetical to that purpose.

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Murray has a very perceptive chapter on the four Visegrad countries of Central Europe, what the