

away - this is one of the pieces
I AM considering for publication.
The other one is on the
Cyclic Collapse of States.
- Rich.

The Old Geography in "New Europe"

A "New Europe" will be declared on December 31, 1992. More than a Europe with open borders or a collective European Parliament, this "new" expression represents the longheld dream of a single European identity. So far, twelve of forty European states have agreed to a greater centralization of political, social and economic power. The possibility remains that more states will consent to this political arrangement but is this really evidence of a *new* Europe? It is yet an unfulfilled dream and attempts to achieve it are ancient European history. Caesar, Charlemagne, Charles V, Phillip II, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Hitler, DeGaulle and many others sought to build a single European state only to see this dream shatter like Humpty Dumpty against the bedrock of European nations. Some 100 nations form a political bedrock--the building blocks of states and the fault lines that lead to their breakup-- that has endured for centuries beneath the shifting sands of the grand European dream. Could this geographic reality shatter the dream once more? That too would be very old history.

Bedrock of Nations

In geographic analysis "submerged" or "hidden" nations are known as the Fourth World: some 5000 nations within the world's 185 recognized states and over 100 within Europe's 40 states. Nations like Wales, Brittany, Corsica, Lombardy, Catalonia, or Slovakia persist unassimilated despite anywhere from 100 to a 1000 years of genocide, ethnocide, and other strategies of unification. The breakup of the Soviet Union, a state claiming one-sixth of the earth's land area, has been attributed to the "rise" of these Fourth World nations.¹ Yugolsavia is breaking apart at this moment as its submerged nations resurface (Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia). Belgium reorganized its government in March 1992 in an attempt to reconcile the two nations of which it is composed: Flanders and Wallonia. Scotland seeks an independent seat in the European Communities Council of Ministers. Other strong regional movements are occurring in nearly every state in Europe.

Shifting Sands

Europe is neither a continent nor a political unit. It is a conceptual abstraction that at different points in time settles then blows like windswept sand across the bedrock of nations. Not even the best of geographers can anchor Europe to a set of physical landforms or water bodies. Only an imaginary line can divide the westernmost promontory of Asia into a separate continent. The Russian Geographer Murzayev concluded one exhaustive effort to find "Europe" in this manner: "Any attempt to divide Europe from Asia on a systematic physical-geographical basis is doomed to fail."²

Europe as a political unit is also an abstraction dependent on the historical moment, the goals of politicians and academics, and the arbitrary pens of cartographers. Political "Europe" expands and contracts over the centuries with both the rise and fall of states and empires. In 300 AD, as part of the Roman Empire, it may have embraced much of North Africa while everything east of the Rhine and north of the Black Sea was part of Asia. In 900 AD Europe would have embraced Anatolia but excluded the Islamic Iberian Peninsula. By 1492 just the reverse was true: Ottoman Turkey was subtracted from Europe and Spain added in. Now, with the breakup of the Soviet Empire, Europe is at its greatest conceptual extent ever: embracing some 40 states (depending on the rules for counting) from the Atlantic to the Urals and from the Mediterranean to the Arctic.

Bedrock Formation

At one time Europe had no states, only nations. What were these nations like between 500 BC and the Roman Conquest of Gaul in 51 BC? It should be no surprise that our readings of the early European nations come from those who sought to conquer them and eventually did. Their Roman enemies called them "barbarians" after the Greek "bar-bar" meaning to babble.³ Obviously they did not understand them very well so we should not assume this epithet to have any accuracy. It reminds one of the experience of Native Americans subjected to cruel and false histories by those who vanquished them. In fact, descriptions of these ancient peoples before the advent of the state sounds remarkably like what we know of Native Americans before the conquest.

Early Europeans tended to live in communally-organized egalitarian societies. Some were hunters and gatherers, and others were swidden agriculturalists. They had nature religions that included elaborate ceremonial centers supervised by shaman or sages who offered spiritual guidance. Among the early Celts, these religious leader were called "Druids" which means three-times wise."⁴ The most important symbol in early European cultures was the spiral or circle, the same as the "sacred hoop" of Native Americans. They composed beautiful music and poetry but nothing was ever written down.

Buried Histories

As with native Americans, the histories of the first European nations has been trivialized and buried. We often act as if American history began with the conquest of "savages" in the New World. We also act as if Western culture began with the Greek and Roman states. Nineteenth Century pseudo-Darwinian notions of history placed states at the apex of the evolutionary pyramid and state expansion suppressed the history and accomplishments of the annexed nations. The knowledge that more than 90% of all states that have ever existed ended in collapse, that nearly 100% represent the spoils of war, or that states are relatively new inventions (5000 years vs 200,000+ years) are overlooked by this combination of teleology and buried history. There is no legitimate reason to wed all art, learning, science and civilization to the idea of the state. Our most important inventions like agriculture and domestication evolved without them. Traditions of democracy had been with the ancient Europeans long before failed Greek and Roman attempts and by many thousands of years before the experimental democracies of France and the United States. In fact it is a miracle that these states, founded in conquest, and originating in slave economics and military conquest should have any pretense to democracy.

The indigenous nations of Europe are also the ones who invented iron plowshares, wheeled harvesters, weather vanes, crop rotation, and horseshoes. The Greeks and Romans even learned about a very basic necessity of civilization from the so-called barbarian nations: soap. Most of the handtools we use today like shovels and pitchforks came from the iron-working Celtic nations of

Europe. Almost all European folklore such as Easter eggs, and folktales such as Little Red Riding Hood, or Tom Thumb came from the first nations of Europe.⁵ More than just traditions and stories, these represent deeply rooted ideas of right and wrong, good and evil, and provide us with the basic archetypes and symbols of thought that frame the European worldview.

Sandstorms

The expansion of the state system did not arrive by innovation and marvelous ideas about civilization. It came by the annexation of ancient nations. This is a little ironic, really, because many of us assume that life was somehow less peaceful before the arrival of great states which brought us civilization by the wholesale slaughter, enslavement, and forced unification of many different nations. We seldom question that contradiction. The annexation of indigenous European nations were as bloody and brutal as the later European expansion into the New World. In 51BC Gaul was conquered by Caesar of the Roman Empire. It was an out and out slaughter with continuous forced removals as people were moved westward in the face of Roman expansion to Hadrian's Wall on the North and the Rhine to the East. Bows, arrows, spears, and clubs were no match for Roman Chariots, armored soldiers, and well-drilled armies.

Back to Bedrock

At the time of the Roman Empire, there were: (1) various Celtic nations such as the Gauls, (2) Germanic nations such as the Frieslanders; (3) Scythian nations such as the Turks; and (4) undefinable ones like the Basques and Catalans. These were Rome's Fourth World peoples. It is these little nations which survived to build modern Europe long after Rome had withered and died. In a sense, the Fourth World nations won after some 50 centuries of Roman domination. They overran Roman Europe and brought Rome to its knees. Many are still with us and still working to create a Europe that represents its bedrock nations such as Euskadi (the Basques), Lombardy, Brittany, Ireland, Friesland, Scotland, Cornwall, Cymru (Wales), Wallonie in Belgium and Galicia in Spain. Old nations also gave birth to new political cultures as various Germanic nations settled west

of the Rhine (e.g. Provence, Saxony, Bavaria, Lombardy or Burgundy). It was in this period too that the Magyars moved westward from the Steppes to found Hungary and the Anglos and Saxons founded England. This ancient bedrock of nations was joined by newly evolving nations like the Catalans who rejected the Visigothic attempt at Empire and created their own nation-state just prior to the Moslem conquest of Iberia in the Ninth Century.⁶

Statebuilding in Europe was not fully reborn until the gunpowder revolution of the 15th century. Before the 1400s, Europe was very decentralized. Rome fractionated into over 2000 different political units: city-states, duchies, parishes, kingdoms, confederations and principalities. As late as 1200 AD just the Italian Peninsula had 200 to 300 independent city-states in addition to Lombardy, Tuscany, Savoy and a dozen other nations.⁷ Throughout Europe the state was little more than a philosophical ideal, "a dream, or even a prophesy, it was nowhere a fact."⁸ The very concept of Europe as a place "connected by history and a common fate" no longer existed.⁹

Peace, Decentralization, and the Holy Roman Empire

Few historians would call the Holy Roman Empire a state. Intended as a rebirth of the Roman Empire by the conquests of Charlemagne in 800 AD, it shortly developed into a very loosely tied feudal-monarchical confederation lacking any centralized military-civilian bureaucracy. The Holy Roman Empire was "neither holy, Roman, nor an empire" as Voltaire expressed it, but a confederation of 1800 small and largely rural nations and 30 independent cities with flourishing economies in the heart of Europe. There was no single sovereign state (during various periods it lacked even an emperor) and few hardline boundaries between nations, only frontiers.

The Holy Roman Empire lasted nearly a thousand years and produced the kind of freedom in which national cultures thrive. Luxembourg, San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and Liechtenstein survived the collapse of the Empire as independent nation-states which endure today. The highly-decentralized Swiss Confederation of autonomous nations also survived as a legacy of the Holy Roman Empire. Scores of Fourth World nations such as Bavaria, Baden, Lorraine, Alsace, Saxony, and Wurtemberg persist from this period with a strong sense of national identity.

Dreams of unity

The Holy Roman Empire was destroyed by the rampages of four tyrants (Louis XIV, Napoleon, Bismark, and Hitler) who sought to build states by annexation and genocide. Hundreds of nations were colonized, forced out or exterminated. Yet many still persist. The historical records of these tiny nations draw little attention from historians today but often support the idea that this loosely organized "empire" was stable and peaceful relative to the surrounding expansionist states. Franche Comte, a nation annexed by Louis XIV, pleaded before the European states, meeting at Utrecht in 1710, to return them to the Holy Roman Empire and thereby "liberate them from French Slavery."¹⁰ On the eve of the Revolution of 1789 Franche Comte still wanted independence. Calenberg, a tiny country of 140 infantry, petitioned England in 1794 to recognize the "nation of Calenberg's" neutrality during the Napoleonic Wars.¹¹ Nevertheless, the brutality of the Napoleonic conquests assigned Calenberg and hundreds of other nations into historical obscurity if not obliteration. Bavaria, and Wurtemberg, two survivors of the Napoleonic Campaigns besieged the Congress of Vienna to restore the Empire and not to attempt the creation "out of different peoples as Prussians and Bavarians so to say a single nation."¹² Nonetheless, Bismark, a Prussian statemaker, did just that. Hitler's "final solution" was to exterminate anyone who declared themselves to be non-German, thus finalizing the process of "German Unification."

Peace and the Fourth World

In light of the brutality engendered in "unifying" European states isn't it odd that anyone should consider the Middle Ages to be a period of anarchy and violence? Surely much of this attitude toward the this period has to do with a simple fact: *the conquerors always write the history*. The Middle Ages from the years of roughly 800 to 1450 were the most peaceful in European history relative to the Roman period which preceded it and the formation of the large gunpowder states which followed. Should it really surprise one to learn that statebuilding is a bloody affair? All but one of the largest states that ever existed between 2,500 BC and 1920 AD were established by war.¹³ The Middle Ages were by no means trouble free but are not nearly as dark and foreboding as state-

biased histories often portray those years. During the Middle Ages there were plenty of wars but at what scale and what cost? Richard Bean, an economic historian, calculated the costs:

- The Roman Empire spent six percent of its state income on war.
- Medieval Europe spent less than one percent.
- During the Sixteenth Century it rose to two percent
- By the Eighteenth Century it reached twelve percent.¹⁴

Costs can also be measured in the number and intensity of wars. Between the gunpowder Revolution and 1800 a significant new war was started every two to three years. Then from 1800 to 1944, one every one to two years. Since World War II, a significant new war has emerged once every 14 months.¹⁵ Casualties, and especially civilian casualties have arisen accordingly culminating in the Twentieth Century: home to the largest and bloodiest wars in history where civilian populations bear death rates greater than soldiers.

The small scale of these medieval wars in Europe is also a matter of historic record. War was the province of a small and privileged elite: very small armies of a few hundred well armored horsemen. These were not even comparable to the armies of the large Mesopotamian states four thousand years earlier. The medieval landscape was one of fortified defenses, and thick castle walls. The greater objective was to repel aggression not wage it, and more particularly from the invading nomads of the steppes. After the gunpowder revolution a handful of large European states came to dominate the world and in military, social, political, and economic terms. There is a relationship between decentralization to Europe's bedrock nations and peace, but also between centralization and war.

Gunpowder and Centralization

History can sometimes be made intelligible by tracing the long history of the arms race. If you want to find corruption in business or politics, they say follow the money. In history, follow the arms developments. The advent of gunpowder was just another improvement in a long line of military advancements which had led to the expansion and diffusion of the state system. Like bronze weapons

in Antiquity, or chariots in the Classical Age, or the Cavalry Revolution that broke the back of Rome, gunpowder in the hands of absolutists, the state-builders of medieval times, produced the modern age. It provided a new devastating tool for statism and many economic, political and social changes came out of that.

For instance, gunpowder reversed the frontier between European agriculturalists and Asian nomads. Hungary was reincorporated into Christian Europe. The Turks of Anatolia advanced with gunpowder and cannon north of the Black Sea and in 1453, Constantinople, the world's most fortified city, was taken by the Turkish Canons initiating the rise of the Ottoman Empire. As Constantinople fell, Charles VII of France was blasting down 60 English forts and castles to take Normandy from England thereby ending the One Hundred Years War in one year's time. The Kingdom of France then entered a long series of wars against nations, incorporating Burgundy in 1482 and taking Brittany in 1488. Muscovy used gunpowder to expand into the Russian Empire. The new cannons were moved along rivers and portages blasting down the defense fortifications of the Tatars along the Volga. In all, the gunpowder revolution was the dividing line between the smaller medieval forms of political organization and the rise of powerful European States. By 1490 Europe was reduced from some 2000 independent political entities to around 200.¹⁶ Eventually, only a handful of European powers would come to dominate the world.

Gunpowder Ahoy

By 1500 cannons were loaded onto the new long distance "Atlantic" sailing ships. These battleships of the Sixteenth Century allowed the Portuguese to blast their way into Asia and the Spanish to decimate all resistance to their occupation of the New World. Soon the British, French and other Europeans would join in projecting unequalled European power over the face of the globe to create an interconnected system of states.¹⁷ A handful of European states imposed the rigid straight-line boundaries of states over the entire world in less than 500 years. With the installation of European designed states, the original statemakers could skillfully impose themselves at the top of the hierarchy.

A New State System

The gunpowder revolution set off a complex series of changes in social, economic and political structures which bear directly on the evolution of the modern state.¹⁸ In overview, larger more centralized governments and bureaucracies were now required. Larger armies demanded this. Once siege cannons could simply blow a gap in military fortifications, it became necessary to strengthen these structures. New designs evolved beginning with the *Trace Italienne* which included large earthen walls to absorb the shock of projectiles. This in turn required even better cannon, and larger besieging armies. The larger armies meant a new relationship between citizen and state: increasing taxation and control of trade. Traders and bankers became increasingly involved with the government since the government depended on them for financing. The distinction between government and private lives blurred.

Thanks to gunpowder, the third or fourth bloodiest war in history was fought in pursuit of European unity. The task failed but out of the *Thirty Years War* emerged the Treaty of Westphalia that defined the new international system of states that persists in its basic features: (1) states agreed to respect the sovereignty of other states; (2) states were prohibited from attacking other states in international law; (3) if states attacked internalized nations no other state would interfere; and ancient nations were regarded as the pawns and bargaining chips in power struggles between large centralized states (e.g. France agrees to take Savoy and Nice in exchange for supporting Garibaldi in conquering Lombardy, Tuscany, Sicily and other Italian nations circa 1849).

The Glue of Unification

Machiavelli once remarked that conquest is easy but the consolidation of rule most difficult. Since there is no historical example of a nation welcoming the invasion and ruin of their culture, states have always had to contrive means to control recalcitrant nations. One way to manufacture a single national culture to unify many occupied nations is to promote an ideology which suggests that the state *is* the nation, the common culture. "Culture" is then administered by military-civilian

bureaucracies who use flags, subsidized theatres, songs, anthems, and the three basic tools of administration, education, and communications to indoctrinate and assimilate its occupied nations. The blueprint for such a plan began with Machiavelli who argued that the best way to build a state is "to destroy *the corporate sense of the native population*[emphasis mine]." Machiavelli sought to transform the old state, the *ancien regime*, into the modern state where peoples possessed state identities, legal identities, not culturally-derived ones. Nations deriving their identities from cultural evolution would be smashed. The heart of Machiavellianism is to convince nations that duty to the state, even to the point of giving up their lives for abstract ideals, is a service to God and Country. The state=you.

It was a trick of the French Revolutionaries to do this by destroying the conceptual tools (the meaning of words) people have for understanding their national identities, (their place in the world). Their first move was to rename the Estates General (the *Royal Parlement* in Paris), the National Constituent Assembly¹⁹ while disbanding the real national *parlements* of Provence, Anjou, Brittany, and a score of other nations. In other words, territory held by the force of the French Army would *determine* the nation rather than a shared historical and cultural experience. On January 31, 1793, one of the architects of the revolution, Georges Jacques Danton, spoke about the new state ideal before French Republican Convention:

The limits of the Republic are marked by nature herself. We shall reach them all, towards every point of the compass, the Rhine, the Atlantic, and the Alps. That is where the frontiers of the Republic *ought* to end [emphasis mine].²⁰

Napoleon

The French Revolution also bred Napoleon who criticized Danton's "Natural Borders": the Alps, Pyrenees, Rhine, and Atlantic. Napoleon wondered, why stop at the Rhine, the Pyrenees, or the Alps? Spain must be French, the country must be French and the government must be French." He not only invaded Spain (a death blow to its New World empire) but then conquered much of Europe destroying hundreds of small, independent nations in the process. Other European statemakers

admired Napoleon even as they sought to destroy him. The ideal of the nation state seemed to be the perfect way to consolidate rule over conquered territories. From 1789 on, the ideal spread turning the Nineteenth Century into the so-called "Age of Nationalism" and confusing scholars ever since because it was in fact the age of statism. Nations resisted; that was nationalism.

Not so Revolutionary

The French Revolution was not a big break with the past just an ingenious new path to centralization. Every modern state since then has embraced this assimilationist ideal. The other choices? Surrender territory to the nations or destroy them. Better to convince them they belong to the state and harness the power of nationalism to the state. That is the modern way and most people have been indoctrinated since the time of the French Revolution to believe that is the absolute good. Nations that try to cling to their identities are called separatists, terrorists, and ethnic groups.

Europe's Fourth World and the "New Europe"

Today the process of unification based on the combination of force and ideals continues and Fourth World nations are still resisting. There are those who would like some if not all of the 40 or so separate states of Europe to embrace a single identity. The state = nation equation is being expanded ideologically to embrace all Europeans. Around 100 nations would like to see Europe have a confederation nations rather than states (you do not hear arguments for 100 different states except when the unifiers want to ridicule the arguments of the nations desiring true confederation). These are same old geopolitical forces that have shaped Europe's past and will shape Europe's future.

Why a Monolithic Europe is Unlikely to Succeed

A simple enumeration of Europe's FW nations is one way to express the geopolitical force of Fourth World nations. Just the more politically active half of them would include (1) Tyrolia; (2) Catalonia; (3) Euskadi; (4) Wales; (5) Karelia; (6) Samiland; (7) Corsica; (8) Slovenia; (9) Slovakia; (10) Croatia; (11) Brittany; (12) Lombardy (13) Northern Ireland; (14) Friesland; (15) Greenland; (16) Scania; (17) Galicia; (18) Scotland; (19) The Faroe Islands; (20) Wales; (21) Abkhazia; (22)

Armenia; (23) England (not Great Britain); (24) Saxony; (25) Sorbia; (26) Cornwall; (27) Occitania; (28) Sorbia; (29) Alsace; (30) Flanders; (31) Andalusia; (32) Estonia; (33) Baden-Worttemberg; (34) Wallachia; (35) Bosnia; (36) Kosovo; (37) Macedonia; (38) Serbia; (39) Carinthia; (40) Lorraine; (41) Jura; (42) Savoy; (43) Friulia; (44) Pomerilia; (45) Castile; (46) Lithuania; (47) Sorbia; (49) Montenegro; and (50) Shetland Islands

Perhaps actions speak louder than numbers. The Scottish National Party has recently stepped up its demands for an independent Scotland with its own seat in the European Community's Council of Ministers. None other than 007, Agent Sean Connery is key spokesperson.²¹ Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia used to be Fourth World nations. They are now fully independent and recognized European nations. We are very likely to see an outcome like that for Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, and most certainly for Slovenia. Perhaps Slovakia will become independent too. At the very least the divisions between the Slovaks and Czechs threaten a constant breakdown and reformulation of the Czeck-Slovak Confederation. Greenland will be independent from Denmark in the coming years. Lombardy and Tyrolia and other Fourth World nations have been successfully pressing the decentralization of Italy since the 1980s. Ever so diplomatically Spain's wealthiest nation, Catalonia, seeks more recognition as an independent people within a European federation. Some Catalans even question a needless replication of government ("Spain") if Europe is unifying. Other nations like Andalusia or appear to be satisfied with the 1975 division of Spain into 17 nations with limited home rule.

There is no easy victor between the ideal and the reality. You can not back one of two sides like in a football game. Some compromise is required. The growth of an organized political life that supports the right of European nations to freely determine their own future could replace the present power hierarchy. The result would probably be a confederation that included more of Europe's nations as both independent states and fully autonomous nations within decentralized and federalized European states.

The Ideal of European Unity and Bedrock Reality

The struggle between the ideal of European unity and the reality of many nations in Europe is several thousand years old. The historical interplay of these geopolitical forces teaches us that Europe's Fourth World nations are not likely to disappear. The notion that it will be the end of nations if everyone can afford VCRs and Compact Disc Players with a plentiful common currency may be well intentioned but naive, and by its ignorance of history and geography contribute to oppressive policies that perpetuate Europe's war-torn history rather than resolving it. We will not see the end of Europe's Fourth World nations. In fact, it is states with the long history of collapse. Nations like Lombardy, Friesland, Brittany, and Euskadi and many others have long persisted beneath the shifting sands of the grand European dream. It may be more sensible to lay the foundations of an enduring European unity upon its bedrock of nations. Altogether, they form manageable political, social, and environmental units that reflect a Europe that can confederate without internal contradictions and in compliance with the principle of self-determination as it has developed in international law. U.N. Resolution 1514 states that all peoples have a right to self-determination. The foundation for such a universal principal is the bedrock of nations that lay beneath the shifting sands of states and empires.

End Notes

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