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# LA DÉFAITE DE L'OCCIDENT



Gallimard

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**LA DÉFAITE  
DE L'OCCIDENT**

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***For George***

Guaranteed to know in advance the secret of the adventure unfinished, they look at the confusion of the events of yesterday and today with the pretension of the judge who dominates the conflicts and sovereignly distributes praise and blame. Historical existence, as it is authentically experienced, pits individuals, groups and nations against each other in defense of incompatible interests or ideas. Neither the contemporary nor the historian is able to say right or wrong to one or the other without reservation. Not that we ignore good and evil, but we ignore the future and every historical cause carries inequities.

RAYMOND ARON,  
*The Opium of Intellectuals*,  
Chapter V: "The Meaning of History"

*Yesterday stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders.*  
(I am here, and I cannot do otherwise.)

MARTIN LUTHER  
at the Diet of Worms, April 1521

## INTRODUCTION

### ***The ten surprises of war***

On February 24, 2022, Vladimir Putin appeared on television screens around the world. He announced the entry of Russian troops into Ukraine. His speech fundamentally focused neither on Ukraine nor on the right to self-determination of the populations of Donbass. It was a NATO dice. Putin explained why he did not want Russia to be caught as it was in 1941 by waiting too long for the inevitable attack: "The continued expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance's infrastructure and the development military territory of Ukraine are unacceptable to us. » A "red line" had been crossed; there was no question of allowing an "anti-Russia" to develop in Ukraine; it was, he insisted, an action of self-defense.

This speech arming the historical and, so to speak, legal validity of his decision revealed with cruel realism a technical balance of power which was favorable to him. If the time had come for Russia to act, it was because the possession of hypersonic missiles gave it strategic superiority. Putin's speech, very constructed, very calm even if it betrayed a certain emotion, was perfectly clear and, if nothing forced him to give in, he would still have deserved to be

discussed. However, the vision immediately emerged of an incomprehensible Putin and Russians who were either incomprehensible, submissive, or stupid. What followed was a lack of debate which disgraced Western democracy: total in two countries, France and the United Kingdom, relative in Germany and the United S

Like most wars, especially world wars, this one did not go as planned; it has already provided us with many surprises. I counted ten main ones.

The first was the outbreak of war itself in Europe, a real war between two States, an unprecedented event for a continent which believed itself settled in perpetual peace.

The second is the two adversaries that this war brings together: the United States and Russia. For more than a decade, China had been designated by America as its main enemy. The hostility towards him was, in Washington, transpartisan and undoubtedly the only point on which Republicans and Democrats managed, in recent years, to agree. However, through Ukrainians, we are participating in a confrontation between the United States and Russia.

Third surprise: Ukraine's military resistance. Everyone expected it to be crushed quickly. Having formed a childish and exaggerated image of a demonic Putin, many Westerners refused to see that Russia had only sent 100,000 to 120,000 men to Ukraine, the country of For comparison, in 1968, to invade the

603,700 km<sup>2</sup>.

Czechoslovakia, a country of 127,900<sup>2</sup>, the USSR and its satellites km Warsaw Pact had sent 500,000.

But the most surprised were the Russians themselves. In their minds, as in those of most informed Westerners, and, indeed, in reality, Ukraine was what is technically called a *failed* state. Since its independence in 1991, it had lost perhaps 11 million inhabitants through emigration and declining fertility. She was

dominated by oligarchs; corruption there reached insane levels; the country and its people seemed for sale. On the eve of the war, Ukraine had become the promised land of cheap surrogacy.

Ukraine had certainly been equipped with Javelin anti-tank missiles by NATO, it had, from the start of the war, American observation and guidance systems, but the fierce resistance of a country in decomposition poses a historical problem. What no one could have predicted was that he would find in the war a reason to live, a justification for his own existence.

The fourth surprise was Russia's economic resilience. We were told that the sanctions, in particular the exclusion of Russian banks from the Swift interbank trading system, would bring the country to its knees. But if a few curious minds, among our political and journalistic staff, had taken the time to read David Teurtrie's work, *Russia. The Return of Power*, published a few months before the war, this ridiculous faith in our omnipotence

nancial would have been spared <sup>1</sup>usMurder shows that the Russians had adapted to the 2014 sanctions and prepared to be autonomous in the IT and banking sectors. In this book we discover a modern Russia, far removed from the rigid neo-Stalinist autocracy that the press portrays to us day after day, capable of great technical, economic and social flexibility – in short, an adversary to be taken seriously.

Fifth surprise: the collapse of all European will. Europe was initially the Franco-German couple, which, since the crisis of 2007-2008, had certainly taken on the appearance of a patriarchal marriage, with Germany as a dominating husband no longer listening to what his partner told him. But even under German hegemony, Europe retained, it was thought, a certain autonomy. However, despite some reluctance at the beginning, across the Rhine, including the hesitation of Chancellor Scholz, the European Union very quickly abandoned any desire to defend its own interests; She



has cut itself off from its Russian energy and (more generally) commercial partner, sanctioning itself more and more harshly. Germany unflinchingly accepted the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines, which partly ensured its energy supply, a terrorist act directed against it as much as against Russia, perpetrated by its American “protector”, associated for the occasion with Norway, a country not belonging to the Union. Germany even managed to ignore Seymour Hersh's excellent investigation into this incredible event, calling into question the State which presents itself as the indispensable guarantor of international order. But we also saw Emmanuel Macron's France vaporize on the international scene, while Poland became Washington's main agent in the European Union, succeeding in this role the United Kingdom, which had become outside the Union by the grace of Brexit.

On the continent, generally, the Paris-Berlin axis has been replaced by a London-Warsaw-Kyiv axis managed from Washington. This evanescence of Europe as an autonomous geopolitical actor is puzzling if we remember that, barely twenty years ago, the joint opposition of Germany and France to the war of Iraq led to joint press conferences by Chancellor Schröder, President Chirac and President Putin.

The sixth surprise of the war was the emergence of the United Kingdom as an anti-Russian rocket and a fly in the ointment of NATO. Relayed by the Western press, his Ministry of Defense (MoD) immediately appeared as one of the most excited commentators on the conflict, to the point of making American neoconservatives look like lukewarm militarists. The United Kingdom wanted to be the first to send long-range missiles and heavy tanks to Ukraine.

This warmongering affected, in an equally bizarre way, Scandinavia, which had long been of a peaceful temperament and more inclined to neutrality than to combat. We therefore find a

seventh surprise, also Protestant, annexed to British excitement, in Northern Europe. Norway and Denmark are very important military relays of the United States, while Finland and Sweden, by joining NATO, reveal a new interest in war, which we will see existed before the invasion Russian from Ukraine.

The eighth surprise is the most... surprising. It came from the United States, the dominant military power. After a slow rise, concern was officially expressed in June 2023 in numerous reports and articles whose original source was the Pentagon: the American military industry is deficient; the world superpower is incapable of ensuring the supply of shells – or anything for that matter – to its Ukrainian protégé. This is a completely extraordinary phenomenon when we know that on the eve of the war the combined gross domestic products (GDP) of Russia and Belarus represented 3.3% of Western GDP (United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, Korea). These 3.3% capable of producing more weapons than the Western world pose a double problem: firstly for the Ukrainian army which loses the war, for lack of material resources; then to the queen science of the West, political economy, whose – dare we say the word – bogus character is thus revealed to the world. The concept of gross domestic product is outdated and we must now rethink the relationship of neoliberal political economy to reality.

Ninth surprise, the ideological solitude of the West and its ignorance of its own isolation. Having become accustomed to decreeing the values to which the world must subscribe, Westerners expected, sincerely, stupidly, that the entire planet would share their indignation at Russia. They were disillusioned. After the first shock of the war passed, we saw the appearance of less and less discreet support for Russia almost everywhere. It could be expected that China, designated by the Americans as the next adversary on their list, would not

don't support NATO. Note, however, that, on both sides of the Atlantic, commentators, blinded by their ideological narcissism, have for more than a year managed to seriously consider that China might not support Russia. India's refusal to get involved was even more disappointing, probably, deep down, because India is the largest democracy in the world, and this is a bit of a mess for the "liberal democracies" camp. We reassured ourselves by saying that it was because Indian military equipment was largely of Soviet origin.

In the case of Iran, which quickly supplied drones to Russia, commentators in the immediate news did not appreciate what this rapprochement meant. Accustomed to putting the two countries in the same bag, that of the forces of evil, the amateur geopoliticians of the media and elsewhere had forgotten to what extent their alliance was not self-evident. Historically, Iran had two enemies: England, replaced by the United States after the fall of the British Empire, and... Russia. This turnaround should have alerted us to the scale of the geopolitical upheaval underway. Turkey, a member of NATO, seems increasingly engaged in a close relationship with Putin's Russia, a relationship which now combines, around the Black Sea, real understanding with rivalry. Seen from the West, the only interpretation considered was that these fellow dictators obviously had common aspirations. But, since Erdogan was democratically re-elected in May 2023, this line has become difficult to hold. In truth, after a year and a half of war, it is the entire Muslim world that seems to consider Russia as a partner rather than an adversary. It is increasingly clear that Saudi Arabia and Russia view each other as economic partners rather than ideological adversaries in managing oil production and prices. More generally, day after day, the economic dynamics of the war have increased hostility towards the West in the developing world, because it suffers from sanctions.

**The tenth and final surprise is about to materialize. It is the defeat of the West. We will be surprised at such an armament when the war is not over. But this defeat is a certainty because the West destroys itself rather than being attacked by Russia.**

**Let us broaden our perspective and escape for a moment the emotion that the violence of war legitimately arouses. We are at the age of complete globalization, in both senses of the word: maximum and finished. Let's try to have a geopolitical vision: Russia, in reality, is not the main problem.**

**Too vast for a decreasing population, it would be incapable of taking control of the planet and has no desire to do so; it is a normal power whose evolution is not mysterious. No Russian crisis destabilizes the global balance. It is indeed a Western and more specifically American crisis, terminal, which endangers the balance of the planet. Its most peripheral waves came up against a mole of Russian resistance, against a classic and conservative nation-state.**

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**On March 3, 2022, barely a week after the start of the war, John Mearsheimer, professor of geopolitics at the University of Chicago, presented an analysis of the events in a video that went around the world. She had the interesting particularity of being very compatible with Vladimir Putin's vision and of accepting the axiom of intelligent and understandable Russian thought. Mearsheimer is what we call in geopolitics a "realist," a member of a school of thought that views international relations as a combination of selfish power struggles between nation-states. His analysis can be summarized as follows: Russia has been telling us for many years that it would not tolerate Ukraine joining NATO. However, Ukraine, whose army had been taken over by military advisors from**

the Alliance, American, British and Polish, was becoming a *de facto member*. So the Russians did as they said, they entered the war. Ultimately it was our surprise that was surprising.

Mearsheimer added that Russia would win the war, because Ukraine was an existential issue for it, but – implicitly – not for the United States; Washington was only playing for marginal gains, 8,000 kilometers away. He deduced that we would be wrong to rejoice if the Russians encountered military difficulties because these would inevitably lead them to invest more in the war. The stakes being existential for some, but not for others, Russia would win.

We can only admire the intellectual and social courage of Mearsheimer (he is American). His interpretation, clear, developing a thought that he had expressed in his books or during the annexation of Crimea in 2014, however presents a major flaw: it only allows us to understand the behavior of the Russians. Like our TV exegetes, who saw nothing but murderous madness in Putin's attitude, Mearsheimer sees nothing but irrationality and irresponsibility in the action of NATO – the Americans, the British, the Ukrainians. I agree with him, but it's a bit short. We still need to explain this Western irrationality. More seriously, he did not understand that Ukraine's military performances have, paradoxically, led the United States into a trap. They too now have a problem of survival, far beyond possible marginal gains, a perilous situation which has led them to constantly reinvest in the war. The image comes to mind of a poker player being coached by a friend to bid and who ends up going all-in with a pair of deuces. In front of him, a chess player who is perplexed, but who wins.

In this book, I will obviously describe and try to understand what is happening in Ukraine, and put forward hypotheses on what is likely to happen not only in Europe but in the world. I also aim to unravel the fundamental mystery that

constitutes the mutual incomprehension of the two protagonists: on the one hand, a Western camp which thinks that Putin is crazy, and Russia with him, on the other, a Russia or a Mearsheimer who, deep down, think it's Westerners who are crazy.

Putin and Mearsheimer do not belong to the same camp and they would undoubtedly have difficulty agreeing on common values. If their visions are nevertheless compatible, it is because they share the same elementary representation of a world made up of nation-states. These nation-states, internally holding a monopoly on legitimate violence, ensure civil peace within them. We can then speak of Weberian States. But on the external level, because they survive in an environment where only the balance of power matters, these States behave in a

Hobbesian agents<sup>2</sup>.

What best denies the Russian conception of the nation-state is the notion of sovereignty, “understood,” Tatiana teaches us. Kastouéva-Jean, as the capacity of the State to independently deny its domestic and foreign policies, without

no external interference or influence.” This notion<sup>3</sup> “has acquired a very particular value during the successive presidencies of Vladimir Putin”. It is “mentioned in multiple documents and official speeches as the most precious asset that a country possesses whatever its regime and political orientations”. It is “a rare good available to only a few states, foremost among which are the United States, China and Russia itself. On the other hand, the most official writings and speeches speak with contempt of the “vassalization” of the countries of the European Union with regard to Washington or describe Ukraine as an American “protectorate”.

In *The Great Delusion*, which dates from 2018, Mearsheimer also thinks in terms of nation-states and sovereignty. For him, the nation-state is not just the state, or the nation described in a way

abstract <sup>4</sup>. It is a State and a nation, certainly, but anchored in a culture, and possessing common values. This vision, all in all traditional, and which takes into account the anthropological and historical depth of the world, is presented in this book, asserted, one would be tempted to say, in an axiomatic mode.

The characteristic of an axiom, or postulate, is that we can deduce theorems from it, but that it itself is not demonstrable. However, it presents a degree of plausibility such that we take it for granted. Let us take Euclid's fifth postulate: through a given point we can only pass a single parallel to a given line. It is not demonstrable and post-Euclidean mathematics, with Riemann and Lobachevsky, started from a different axiom. But, all the same, for common sense, Euclid's fifth postulate is very convincing. Likewise, saying that there are nation-states rooted in diverse cultures constitutes an axiom which, even if it is repeatedly asserted in a somewhat dogmatic manner as Mearsheimer does, presents a high degree of plausibility. After all, the world resulting from

great waves of decolonization of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were organized into states which could not imagine anything other than trying to become nations. He knew to look at the composition of the UN to be convinced.

This axiom poses a problem: it blinds Mearsheimer just as it blinds the Russians; it puts them, vis-à-vis Western governments, in a position of incomprehension which is symmetrical to that of Westerners vis-à-vis Russia.

In his introductory speech to the war on February 24, 2022, Putin called America and its allies the “empire of lies”, a term very far from strategic realism and which rather evokes an adversary lost in a poorly denied psychological state. As for Mearsheimer, remember that his book is called *The Great Delusion*. Stronger than illusion, *Delusion* possibly refers to psychosis or neurosis. The subtitle

of the book is *Liberal Dreams and International Realities*. The American project of "liberal" expansion is presented as a dream and, in the face of this dream, there is a reality of which Mearsheimer would be the representative. He treats the neoconservatives who have come to dominate the American geopolitical establishment the way we treat Putin: he psychiatrizes them.

What Putin, a practitioner of international relations, senses through his expression "empire of lies" but does not manage to completely deny and what Mearsheimer, theorist of international relations, flatly refuses to see is a very simple truth: West, the nation-state no longer exists.

In this book, I will propose a so-called post-Euclidean interpretation of global geopolitics. It will not take for granted the axiom of a world of nation-states. On the contrary, using the hypothesis of their disappearance in the West, it will make the behavior of Westerners understandable

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The concept of nation-state presupposes the belonging of the various strata of the population of a territory to a common culture, within a political system which can be democratic, oligarchic, authoritarian or totalitarian. To be applicable, it also requires that the territory in question enjoy a minimum degree of economic autonomy; this autonomy does not, of course, exclude commercial exchanges, but these must, in the medium or long term, be more or less balanced. A systematic deficit renders the concept of nation-state obsolete since the territorial entity considered can only survive through the perception of a tribute or a prebend from outside, without compensation. This criterion alone allows us to confirm, even before the in-depth analysis of [chapters 4 to 10](#), that



whose foreign trade is no longer balanced, but always in deficit, are no longer completely nation-states.

A properly functioning nation-state also presupposes a specific class structure, including the middle classes as a center of gravity, therefore more than just good understanding between the ruling elite and the masses. Let's be even more concrete and insert social groups into geographical space. In the history of human societies, the middle classes run, with other groups, an urban network. It is thanks to a concrete urban hierarchy, populated by an educated and differentiated middle class, that the State, the nervous system of the nation, can appear. We will see to what extent the late, conflicting, tragic development of the urban middle classes in Eastern Europe is a central explanatory factor in its history until the Ukrainian war. We will also see how the destruction of the middle classes contributed to the disintegration of the American nation-state.

The idea of a nation-state that can only function thanks to strong middle classes which irrigate and nourish the state is strongly reminiscent of Aristotle's *Balanced City*. Here is how he talks about the middle classes in his *Policy* :

But the legislator must always make room for the middle class in his constitution: if he establishes his oligarchic laws, he will not lose sight of the middle class; if his laws are democratic, he must reconcile them with his laws. Wherever the middle class numerically outweighs both extremes together or one of the two alone, we can have a stable government there. No fear, in fact, of ever seeing the rich unite their voices with those of the poor against the middle class: neither group will ever accept being the slave of the other and, if they seek a form of government which better serves the common interest, they will find no other than this, because they could not bear, because of their mutual distrust, to only command in turn; everywhere, in fact, the one who inspires the most

<sup>5</sup>  
conance is the arbiter; but the referee here is the man who has an average position

Let us continue, without aspiring to any originality, our inventory of concepts whose articulation allows the very existence of the

nation. Without national consciousness, by definition, there is no more nation-state, but we are bordering on tautology here.

In the case of the European Union, going beyond the nation is quite easy to admit since it is at the very heart of the project, even if the form it took is not the one that had been planned.

What is curious is the claim of European elites to make the surpassing of the nation and its persistence coexist. In the case of the United States, no overtaking of the nation is officially planned. However, as we will see, the American system, even if it succeeded in subjugating Europe, spontaneously suffers from the same evil as it: the disappearance of a national culture shared by the masses and the ruling classes. The implosion, in stages, of WASP culture – white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant – since the 1960s has created a private empire of center and project, an essentially military organization led by a group without culture (in the anthropological sense) which only has power and violence as its fundamental values. This group is generally referred to as "neocons". It is quite narrow but operates in an atomized, anomic upper class, and it has a great capacity for geopolitical and historical nuisance.

The social evolution of Western countries has led to a difficult relationship between elites and reality. But we cannot simply classify "post-national" acts as crazy or incomprehensible; these phenomena have a logic. It is another world, a new mental space that we will have to deny, study, understand.

Let's return to Mearsheimer and his momentous video from March 3, 2022. He predicted, I said, an inevitable victory for the Russians because in their eyes the Ukrainian question is existential whereas it would not be for the United States. But if we get rid of the idea that the United States is a nation-state and accept that the American system has become something else entirely; that the standard of living of Americans depends on imports that exports no longer cover; that America no longer has class

national leader in the classic sense; that it no longer even has a well-denied central culture but that a gigantic state and military mechanism remains, other outcomes become conceivable than the simple withdrawal of a nation-state which would assume, after its withdrawals from Vietnam, of Iraq and Afghanistan, yet another defeat in Ukraine, by Ukrainians.

Should we see the United States, rather than a nation-state, as an imperial state? Many have done so. The Russians themselves do not deprive themselves of this. What they call the "collective West", in which Europeans are only vassals, is a kind of pluralistic imperial system. But using the concept of empire requires the observance of certain criteria: a dominant center and a dominated periphery. This center is supposed to have a common elite culture as well as a reasonable intellectual life. This is no longer the case, as we will see, in the United States.

*Low-imperial* state, then? The parallel between the United States and Ancient Rome is attractive. Having tried my hand at it in *After the Empire*, I noted that Rome, by making itself mistress of the entire Mediterranean basin and by improvising a sort of first

*globalization*, had also liquidated its massive middle class<sup>6</sup>. The aux in Italy of wheat, manufactured products and slaves had destroyed the peasantry and the crafts, in a way which is reminiscent of that in which the working class American has succumbed to the export of Chinese products. In both cases, stretching the line a little, we can say that a society emerged polarized between economically useless plebs and a predatory plutocracy. The path to a long decadence was now traced and, despite some ups and downs, inevitable.

The qualifier "low-imperial" is nevertheless not satisfactory due to the novelty of many current elements: the existence of the Internet, the speed of developments (incomparable) and the presence around the United States of these nations giants like Russia and China (the Roman Empire had no comparable neighbors; Apart from distant Persia, he was, so to speak, alone in his

world). Finally, fundamental difference: the Late Empire saw the establishment of Christianity. However, one of the essential characteristics of our time is the complete disappearance of the Christian substrate, a crucial historical phenomenon which, precisely, explains the dispersal of the American ruling classes. We will come back to this at length: Protestantism, which, to a large extent, had been the economic strength of the West, is dead.

A phenomenon as massive as it is invisible, dizzying even when we think about it a little, we will see that it is one of the keys, if not *the* decisive explanatory key to the current global turbulence.

To return to our attempt at classicization, I would be tempted to speak, concerning the United States and its dependencies, of a *post-imperial* State : if America retains the military machinery of the empire, it no longer has in its heart a culture carrying intelligence and this is why it engages in practice in thoughtless and contradictory actions such as accentuated diplomatic and military expansion in a phase of massive contraction of its industrial base - knowing that "modern war without industry " is a

oxymoron.

Since 2002 (the year of *After the Empire*), I have been observing the evolution of the United States. I had then hoped that they would return to a form of giant nation-state, which they were in their positive imperial phase of the years 1945-1990, facing the USSR. Today, recognizing the death of Protestantism, I must admit that this revival is impossible, which basically only confirms a fairly general historical phenomenon: the non-reversibility of most fundamental processes. This principle applies here to several essential fields: to the sequence "national stage, then imperial then post-imperial"; to religious extinction, which ultimately led to the disappearance of social morality and collective feeling; to a process of centrifugal geographic expansion combining with a disintegration of the original heart of the system. The increase in American mortality, specifically in Republican or Trumpist interior states, at the very time when

Hundreds of billions of dollars are flowing towards kyiv, is characteristic of this process.

In *The Final Fall* (1976) and in *After the Empire* (2002) (two books which speculated on future systemic collapses), I used “rationalizing” representations of human history and the activity of States.

<sup>7</sup>. In *After the Empire*, for example, I interpreted the diplomatic and military agitation of the United States as "theatrical micromilitarism", a posture aimed at giving, at a reasonable cost, the impression that America remained indispensable to the world. after the fall of the Soviet Union. This was basically assuming they had a rational power objective. In this book, I will of course keep the elements which relate to classic geopolitics: standard of living, strength of the dollar, mechanisms of exploitation, objective military balance of power, a universe that is more or less rational on the surface. The question of the American standard of living and the risk that a systemic collapse would pose will be very present. But I will abandon the exclusive hypothesis of a reasonable reason and propose a broader vision of geopolitics and history, better integrating what is absolutely irrational in man, notably his spiritual needs.

The chapters which follow will therefore also deal with the religious matrix of societies, with the solutions which man has endeavored to find to the mystery of his condition and to its difficultly acceptable character; of the torments that the terminal disintegration of the Christian religious matrix in the West and, particularly, of the Protestant variant can cause. Not everything in its effects will be presented as negative and this book is not radically pessimistic. But we will see the appearance of a “nihilism” which will occupy us a lot. What I will call the “zero religious state” will produce, in certain cases, the worst, a deication of the void.

I will use the word “nihilism” in a sense which is not necessarily the most common, and which will rather recall – and this is not

not by chance – the Russian nihilism of 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is on a basis the 19th century nihilistic that America and Ukraine have associated themselves even if these two nihilisms concretely result from quite different dynamics. Nihilism, as I understand it, has two fundamental dimensions. The most visible is the physical dimension: an impulse to destroy things and people, a notion that is sometimes very useful when studying war. The second dimension is conceptual but no less essential, especially when we think about the destiny of societies, the reversible nature or not of their decline: nihilism then tends irresistibly to destroy the very notion of truth, to prohibit any reasonable description of the world. . This second dimension joins, in a certain way, with the most common meaning of the word, which denies it as an amorality stemming from an absence of values.

Having a scientific temperament, I have a lot of difficulty distinguishing the two couples that form good and evil, true and false; in my eyes, these conceptual pairs merge.

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Two mentalities are thus confronted. On the one hand, the strategic realism of nation-states, on the other, the post-imperial mentality, emanating from a disintegrating empire. Neither of them grasps the whole reality since the first did not understand that the West was no longer made up of nation-states, that it had become something else; and that the second has become impervious to the idea of national sovereignty. But the grips on reality of both are not equivalent and the asymmetry works in Russia's favor.

As Adam Ferguson, a man of the Scottish Enlightenment, showed in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), human groups do not exist in themselves, but always in relation to other equivalent human groups. On the most

tiny and the most distant of the islands, he explains, as long as it is inhabited, we will always find two human groups facing each other. The plurality of social systems is consubstantial with humanity and these systems are organized against each other. "The titles of fellow citizens and compatriots," wrote Ferguson, "if they were not opposed to those of foreigner and non-native [...] would fall into disuse and lose their meaning.

We love individuals for their personal qualities; but we love our country as a party in divisions

of humanity [...] <sup>8</sup> . »

The emergence of France and England provides a splendid illustration of this. During the Middle Ages, these two state productions of the Seine valley will oppose each other. Then, for us French people, the substitute adversary will have been Germany, the main rival also, we forget, of England on the eve of the war of 1914.

One of Ferguson's key theses is that a society's internal morality is related to its external immorality. It is hostility to another group that makes us stand in solidarity with our own.

"Without the rivalry of nations and the practice of war," he writes, "civil society itself would have been difficult to find an object or

a form" <sup>9</sup> And to specify that "[i]t is vain to hope to give the multitude of a people a feeling of union within them without admitting hostility towards those who oppose them. If, all of a sudden, we extinguished the emulation which is excited from abroad, it is probable that we would break or weaken social bonds at home and that we would close the most lively scenes of the activity and

national virtues <sup>10</sup> ".

The current Western system aspires to represent the entire world and no longer recognizes the existence of another. But the lesson of Ferguson is that if we no longer recognize the existence of another, legitimate, we cease to exist ourselves. Russia's strength, on the contrary, is to think in terms of sovereignty and equivalence

**of nations: taking into account the existence of hostile forces, it can ensure its social cohesion.**

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**The paradox of this book is that, starting from a military action by Russia, it will lead us to the crisis in the West. The analysis of Russian social dynamics from the years 1990-2022, with which I will begin, will turn out to be simple and easy. The trajectories of Ukraine and the former popular democracies, paradoxical in their own way, will not appear very complicated.**

**On the other hand, examining Europe, the United Kingdom and especially the United States will be a more difficult intellectual exercise. We will then have to confront illusions, reefs and mirages before penetrating the reality of what increasingly resembles a black hole: beyond the downward spiral of Europe, we will find, in the United Kingdom and the United States United, internal imbalances of such magnitude that they become threats to the stability of the world.**

**The ultimate paradox is that we will have to admit that war, an experience of violence and suffering, a realm of stupidity and error, is also a reality test. War takes us to the other side of the mirror, into a world where ideology, statistical illusions, media failures and the lies of States, without forgetting the delusions of conspiracy, are gradually losing their power. A simple truth will emerge: the Western crisis is the driving force behind the history we are experiencing. Some knew it. At the end of the war, no one will be able to deny it anymore.**

**1. David Teurtrie, *Russia. The return of power*, Dunod, 2021.**

**2. Weber denies the State through its monopoly on legitimate violence; Hobbes presents the state of nature as a war of all against all.**



- 3. Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean, “National sovereignty in the Russian vision”, *Revue National Defense*, n<sup>o</sup> 848, March 2022, p. 26-31.**
- 4. Published by Yale University Press: So we are not on the periphery of the American system.**
- 5. Aristotle, *Politics*, Les Belles Lettres, 1989, vol. II, p. 174.**
- 6. Emmanuel Todd, *After the Empire. Essay on the decomposition of the American system*, Gallimard, 2002; see reissue. “Current Folio”, with an unpublished afterword by the author, 2004, p. 94-95.**
- 7. Emmanuel Todd, *The Final Fall. Essay on the decomposition of the Soviet sphere*, Robert Laont, 1976; new expanded edition, 1990.**
- 8. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 25.**
- 9. *Ibid.*, p. 28.**
- 10. *Ibid.*, p. 29.**

## CHAPTER 1

### ***Russian stability***

The strength of Russia was one of the great surprises of the war. She shouldn't have been; it was easy to predict it and it will be easy to explain it. The real question is: why did the Westerners underestimate their adversary to this extent when there was nothing hidden about his assets and the data concerning them was accessible? How, with a *community intelligence* of one hundred thousand people in the United States alone, could they have imagined that the Swift cut and the sanctions would reduce this country of 17 million possible<sup>2</sup>, having all the resources natural km and which, since 2014, had openly prepared to face such sanctions?

To show the enormity of an error of perception which has spread over all the Putin years, let us start from the title of a column published in *Le Monde* on March 2, 2022, signed by Sylvie Kaumann, editorialist of the newspaper: "The assessment of Putin at the head of Russia is a long descent into hell for a country of which he has made an aggressor. » This is how the major French newspaper of reference described a period which, after the collapse of the 1990s, was precisely that of the escape from hell. It is not a question here of denouncing, of being indignant, of accusing of bad faith – the

people who think this way are sincere but to <sup>1</sup> understand how such nonsense could be written when it was so easy to see that Russia was doing much better.

## ***Successful stabilization: proof by “moral statistics”***

Between 2000 and 2017, the central phase of Putin's stabilization, the death rate from alcoholism fell in Russia from 25.6 per 100,000 inhabitants to 8.4, the suicide rate from 39.1 to 13.8, the rate homicide rate from 28.2 to 6.2. This means, in raw figures, that deaths from alcoholism rose from 37,214 per year to 12,276, suicides from 56,934 to 20,278 and homicides from 41,090 to 9,048. And it is a country that has experienced this evolution that we are told is caught in “a long descent into hell”.

In 2020, the homicide rate fell even lower: to 4.7 per 100,000, six times lower than when Putin came to power. And the suicide rate, in 2021, was 10.7, or 3.6 times lower. As for annual infant mortality, it fell from 19 per 1,000 “children born alive” in 2000 to 4.4 in 2020, falling below the American rate of 5.4 (UNICEF). However, this last indicator, to the extent that it concerns the weakest people in a society, is particularly significant for assessing its general state.

But these demographic indicators, which sociologists of the XIX<sup>e</sup> century called “moral statistics”, evoke a reality more tangible and deeper than the others. If we follow the economic data of Russia, we observe a catch-up, a rise in the standard of living, rapid between 2000 and 2010, followed between 2010 and 2020 by a deceleration which resulted from the difficulties

caused in particular by the sanctions following the annexation of Crimea. But the trend illustrated by moral statistics is more regular, deeper, and reflects a state of social peace, the rediscovery by Russians, after the nightmare of the 1990s, that a stable existence was possible.

This stability, which we note in the most objective facts possible, demographic data, has become fundamental for the country and it is one of Putin's obsessions in his speeches. These objective elements have not prevented various NGOs, most often indirect agents of the American government, which we can call OPNGs, *pseudo* non-governmental organizations, from constantly degrading Russia in their evaluations. To the point of uttering nonsense. When, in 2021, Transparency International, which ranks the countries of the world according to

their corruption rate, put the United States at 27<sup>e</sup> rank and Russia at 136<sup>e</sup> rank, we were faced with an impossibility. A country that enjoys a lower infant mortality rate than the United States cannot be more corrupt than them. Infant mortality, because it reflects the deep state of a society, is undoubtedly in itself a better indicator of real corruption than these indicators manufactured according to who knows what criteria.

Moreover, the countries with the lowest infant mortality are those which we can verify are also the least corrupt: these are the Scandinavian countries and Japan. We therefore see that, at the top of the ranking, indicators of infant mortality and corruption are correlated.

## ***Economic recovery***

We cannot blame the newspaper *Le Monde* and the CIA for not using infant mortality as a trend indicator.

But the economic data was known. We note, throughout the period, in addition to a rise in living standards, very low unemployment rates and the return of Russia to strategic economic areas.

The most spectacular concerns agriculture. As David Teurtrie teaches us in his 2021 book, Russia has succeeded, in the space of a few years, not only in achieving food self-sufficiency, but in becoming one of the largest exporters of agricultural products in the world. : “In 2020, Russian agri-food exports reached a record level of \$30 billion, a figure higher than revenues from natural gas exports in the same year (\$26 billion).

This dynamic, which was initially driven by cereals and oilseeds, is now also based on meat exports. [...] The performance of the agricultural sector allowed Russia to become a net exporter of agricultural products in 2020, for the first time in its recent history: between 2013 and 2020, Russian agri-food exports multiplied

by three while imports were divided by two A splendid snub to the <sup>2</sup> . » Soviet era which was, as we know, marked by the failure of agriculture.

Russia's continued existence as the world's second largest arms exporter is less surprising. On the other hand, after Chernobyl, its new and recent status as the leading exporter of nuclear power plants, leaving France far behind, constitutes another surprise. Rosatom, the state company in charge of the sector, had, in 2021, thirty-five reactors under construction abroad

(notably in China, India, Turkey and Hungary) <sup>3</sup> .

Another area where the Russians have demonstrated flexibility and dynamism: the Internet. As for us this is the quintessence of modernity, one would have expected the relevant services to be aware of the progress made by the Russians. That wasn't the case at all.

Teurtrie explains very well how the Russians had an attitude that was both statist and liberal, national and flexible in this matter: determined to remain in a competitive universe at the same time as they were anxious to preserve their autonomy. “In reality,” he notes, “the Russian version of Internet regulation is located, as in many areas, halfway between the provisions taken in Europe and those adopted by China. Russia shares with Europe the presence of American Internet giants who benefit from a significant audience on the Runet (this is particularly the case of YouTube). [...] But unlike Europe, which is largely powerless in this area, Russia can rely on national champions present in all segments of the Internet in order to remain autonomous and offer solutions.

alternative solutions for Russian Internet users<sup>4</sup>. » While remaining “widely open to Western solutions”, it “is undoubtedly the only power in which competition is expressed

genuine between the Gafa and their local equivalents<sup>5</sup>.

François Hollande, after Angela Merkel, claimed to have signed the 2014 Minsk agreements to give the Ukrainians time to arm themselves. This was certainly the Ukrainians' intention. In the much foggier minds of Angela Merkel and François Hollande, who can know? But what we have hardly seen and what Teurtrie's work suggests is that these agreements were, for

the Russians too, a way to buy time for which<sup>6</sup>. One of the reasons in 2014 they did not go further than the capture of Crimea and agreed to a ceasefire is that they were not ready to be disconnected from Swift, which, then, would have been truly catastrophic. The Minsk agreements were signed because everyone wanted to buy time. Ukrainians prepare for war on the ground; the Russians, in order to be ready to face a maximum sanctions regime. As Teurtrie reports, in 2014, the Russian Central Bank set up the

Russian Financial Messaging System (SPFS) <sup>7</sup>. In April 2015, the National Payment Card System (NSPK) was launched, “which guarantees the functioning of cards issued by Russian banks on national territory even in the event of Western sanctions. At the same time, the Russian Central Bank creates the “Mir” card payment system <sup>8</sup>”.

### ***Thanks for the sanctions!***

When we observe the evolution of Russia since the collapse of communism, we can only be astonished by its extremely bumpy path: a very brutal fall, then a very rapid rise. But the most disconcerting thing is the adaptability that the country has demonstrated since the sanctions resulting from the Crimean War in 2014. Each sanctions regime seems to have led Russia to carry out chain economic reconversions and to resume its autonomy from the Western market.

The example of wheat production is perhaps the most spectacular. In 2012, Russia produced 37 million tonnes of wheat, in 2022 80 million, more than a doubling in ten years.

This exhibility takes on its full meaning if we compare it to the negative exhibility of neoliberal America. In 1980, when Reagan came to power, U.S. wheat production was 65 million tons. In 2022, it was only 47 million. Let us see in this decline an introduction to the reality of the American economy which we will discuss in [Chapter 9](#).

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Under Putin, the Russians never entered into full protectionism and they therefore accepted that a certain number of activities would be undermined. Their civil aeronautical industry has been sacrificed since they bought Airbus. Their industry

automobile also suffered. But if the country has managed to maintain a relatively high proportion of its active population in industry, not to completely integrate into the globalized economy and not to put its workforce at the service of the West like the did the old popular democracies, it is because it benefited from partial protectionism and circumstances.

Jacques Sapir enlightened me on this point. “The main measure to protect industry and agriculture was the very sharp depreciation of the ruble in 1998-1999. Expressed in real exchange rates (comparing inations and respective productivity increases), the depreciation, in 1999, had to be at least 35%.

Subsequently, the nominal exchange rate fell less than the inflation gap rose, but significant productivity gains from 2000 to 2007 maintained a depreciation of the real exchange rate of around –25%. This depreciation eroded from 2008 to 2014. Then, with the change in strategy of the Central Bank of Russia (shift to ination targeting), the ruble fell

again depreciated in real terms from 2014 to 2020 <sup>9</sup>. »

Added to this protection born from the weakness of the ruble are customs duties: “Regarding tariff measures,” Sapir continues, “Russia had applied a rate of 20% on manufactured industrial products since 2001 before accepting a rate of 7, 5% from its entry into the World Trade Organization in August 2012. Obviously, with the war in Ukraine, all this no longer affects Western products. As for agricultural products, the rate in 2003 was around 7.5% (fruits and vegetables) and it rose after Russia's accession to the WTO to 5%. But, once again, the embargo made it possible to reestablish a strongly protectionist policy. »

As we understand from reading Teurtie, the Western sanctions of 2014, if they caused some difficulties for the Russian economy, were also an opportunity for it: they forced it to find substitutes for its imports. and to



redeploy internally. In an April 2023 article, American economist James Galbraith estimated that the 2022 sanctions have had the same effect<sup>10</sup>. They made it possible to establish a system of protection which, given the Russians' now very strong support for the market economy, the regime would never have dared to impose on the population. “[W]ithout the sanctions,” he writes, “it is difficult to imagine how the opportunities available to Russian companies and entrepreneurs today could have come about. From a political, administrative, legal, ideological point of view, even at the beginning of 2022, the Russian government would have had the greatest difficulties in taking comparable measures, such as customs duties, quotas and expulsions of companies, given the the deep hold that the idea of the market economy exerts on political decision-makers, the inuence of the oligarchs and the allegedly limited nature of the “special military operation”. In this regard, despite the shock and costs to the Russian economy, the sanctions have clearly been a gift. »

## ***Putin is not Stalin***

Again, all of this data was accessible; they showed the strength and adaptability of the Russian economy. The main thing, I repeat, is not to highlight them but to ask why Western leaders have remained blind to reality.

Their representation of current Russia, that of a country dominated by a monstrous Putin and populated by imbecile Russians, takes us back to the Stalin box. Everything was interpreted as a return of Russia to its supposed Bolshevik essence. But, in addition to the excellent book by David Teurtrie, specialist analysts and commentators had the works of Vladimir Shlapentokh at their disposal.

Shlapentokh (1926-2015) was born Soviet, and Jewish, in Kyiv. He was one of the founders of empirical sociology in the Russian language during the Brezhnev era. Faced with the anti-Semitism of rotting Sovietism, he emigrated to the United States in 1979, continuing, from there, to work on Russia, the United States and questions of general sociology. His *Freedom, Repression, and Private Property in Russia* was published in 2013 by Cambridge University Press, a publisher that could hardly be described as marginal or outside the system. This book offers the nuanced and wonderfully competent (and Putin-hostile) view of a man who experienced Brezhnev Russia from the inside and studied Putin's Russia while he became an American citizen. When you read it, it becomes easy to deny Putin's regime, not as the exercise of power of an extraterrestrial monster subjugating a passive and passive people, but as an understandable phenomenon, which is part of the continuity of a general history of Russia while presenting specific features.

Of course, the state apparatus remains central. How, moreover, could it be otherwise given the importance of energy resources? A company like Gazprom can only be controlled by public authorities. Of course, the KGB, now the FSB, from which Putin came, continues to play an essential role. Of course, Russia has not become a liberal democracy. For my part, I would tend to deny it as an authoritarian democracy, giving each of these two terms – democracy, authoritarian – equivalent weight.

Democracy because, even if the elections are a little hounded, the polls – and this is not contested by anyone – show us that support for the regime is unwavering in times of war as in times of peace. Authoritarian because, clearly, the regime does not meet the criterion, essential for a liberal democracy, of respect for the rights of minorities. The unanimist dimension of the regime is evident with all that

**involves restrictions on the freedoms of the press and various civil society groups.**

**But Putin's regime is above all remarkable for a few features which, in themselves, mark a radical break with Soviet-style authoritarianism. First, as James Galbraith recalled, a visceral attachment to the market economy, despite the central role played by the State. This attachment is very understandable for those who have experienced the monumental failure of the managed economy. Furthermore, if Putin has effectively brought the high elite of Moscow and St. Petersburg into line, he pays extreme attention to workers' demands, and constantly seeks to strengthen support for his regime in popular circles. I understand that this trait is frowned upon today throughout a West which despises, in principle, a people from whom only... "populism" can emanate.**

**A crucial element should have alerted Western analysts to the novelty of the historical object before their eyes: Putin's unwavering attachment to freedom of movement.**

**With it, Russians have the right to leave Russia and they retain it in times of war. Where we find one of the characteristics of liberal democracy: total freedom of exit. It is the sign of a regime which, in its own way, is sure of itself or is taking the gamble of being so.**

**The ultimate novelty, which Shlapentokh was well placed to talk about since he had to flee the USSR as a Jew: the complete absence of anti-Semitism, which should delight us while confirming to us that the Russian regime and society are in their place.**

**Traditionally, in fact, when Russian leaders encountered difficulties and attempted to reestablish their authority, they looked to anti-Semitism as an expedient. Shlapentokh recalls to what extent, under Stalin, then from 1968, the USSR had become anti-Semitic. This is quite simply why Jews left en masse as soon as they could, after the collapse of the system.**

To put these two singular and positive traits – freedom of exit and the absence of anti-Semitism – to Putin's credit would undoubtedly have been too much to ask of Western journalists and politicians. They should have at least alerted them to a certain self-confidence of the regime, to its stability. The a priori dogma of the fragility of the regime, threatened by its middle classes, has blinded them, and continues to do so. We verified this when, on June 23 and 24, 2023, Western commentators absurdly placed their hope in the rebellion of Yevgeny Prigogine, the boss of the Wagner group. Western blindness is definitely no less stable than the Russian regime and society.

## ***More Russian engineers than American engineers***

A stabilized society, an economy in working order: should we stop the analysis at this stage? Was she already able to understand the efficiency shown by the Russians during the duration of the war itself? On the eve of the invasion of Ukraine, I remind you, Russia, including Belarus, represented only 3.3% of the West's GDP. How were these 3.3% able to hold out and produce more weapons than the adversary? Why do Russian missiles, which were expected to disappear due to exhaustion of stocks, continue to fall on Ukraine and its army? How has massive production of military drones been able to develop since the start of the war, after the Russian military noticed their deficiency in this area?

When we come to the United States, I will show the largely positive nature of their GDP, which records activities which we are not sure whether to qualify as useless or unreal. For now, let's just say that Russia's GDP represents,

him, more the production of tangible goods than poorly defined activities.

Go further. Let's descend into the sociological depths of the working population, because, better and more than a GDP, an economy is a working population, with its different levels of training and types of skills. However, what fundamentally distinguishes the Russian economy from the American economy is, among people who pursue higher education, the much larger proportion of those who choose to pursue engineering studies: around 2020, 23.4% compared to 7.2% in the United States.

Russia is not alone in this case and we will quickly understand that the indicator is operational if we specify that Japan has 18.5% of engineering students, and that Germany, whose industrial performance fascinate us, accounts for 24.2%. France is at 14.1%, but we must not forget that from this 14.1% we must deduct the polytechnicians, mining engineers and central students who will be lost in the bank and

“financial engineering” <sup>11</sup>.

What do these 23.4% of Russians represent, on a gross quantitative level, compared to 7.2% of Americans? Let us relate these percentages to the population of the two countries. Russia then had 146 million inhabitants, the United States, 330 million. David versus Goliath. We forget it because of the size of Russian territory, but, in demographic terms, the fight is asymmetrical. The United States is in itself, and without its allies, enormous. Russia is barely more populated than Japan and we could therefore concentrate its population on the narrow Japanese archipelago without too much effort.

Let's take the number of people aged 20 to 34 in the two countries, 21.5 million in Russia (around 2020) and 46.8 million in the United States. Here we find the global imbalance. Furthermore, and even if higher education is not denied in exactly the same way in Russia and the United States,

let us estimate that, in these two countries, 40% of a cohort pursues higher education. We can now proceed to a fateful calculation. In the United States, 7.2% of 40% of 46.8 million people make 1.35 million engineers. In Russia, 23.4% of 40% of 21.5 million gives 2 million. Despite the disproportion of populations, Russia manages to train significantly more engineers than the United States.

I am aware of the partial nature of this calculation, which does not take into account the fact that the United States imports engineers and, more generally, a very large fraction of its scientific community, often of Chinese or Indian origin. Still, we can understand how the Russian David was able to face the American Goliath on an industrial and technological, and therefore military, level.

## ***Middle classes and anthropological realities***

When one examines Western sociological and political writings of the 1840s-1980s, it is clear that the working class was the central issue, the problem class whose behavior was expected to bring about order or disorder, stability or revolution. We hoped for her, or she was disappointed, depending on your point of view. Today, in our globalized world, the main tasks of our working classes having been outsourced to Asia, it is the middle classes that attract the attention of sociologists and politicians, and this book, moreover, is no exception. to the rule; we hope in them when they grow, we worry for them when they become poorer. Marxism expected a revolution arising from the proletariat. Neo-liberalism expects from the uprising of the middle classes – Russian, Chinese, Iranian – the fall of regimes resistant to the Western order. Since Aristotle's lesson (I recalled it in the introduction), it is agreed

in the West that, without dominant middle classes, a society cannot be balanced, democratic, liberal. And, in fact, we have noted, over the last decades, a connection between the emergence of educated middle classes and the development of liberal, even libertarian, tendencies. But is the class structure, denied in economic or educational terms, really the only factor in the success or failure of liberal democracy?

Let's look at the Russian middle classes. Can we reasonably imagine that they will one day overthrow Putin's authoritarian regime?

After all, it was the coming of age of a certain type of middle class, denied education, that brought about the collapse of communism. In 1976, in *The Final Fall. Essay on the decomposition of the Soviet sphere*, I measured the economic failure of the system and predicted its breakdown based on an observed increase in the infant mortality rate. The triggering factor for the fall, however, was not, it now seems to me, the economic paralysis of the system but rather the emergence of an upper educated middle class.

But what did Soviet communism represent? The first stage of mass literacy. We can empirically associate the spread of a primary democratic temperament, in various forms, liberal or authoritarian, egalitarian or inegalitarian, depending on the anthropological structures of each country, to the crossing of a threshold of 50% of literate men. In the Anglo-American world, this

passage generated pure liberalism from the 17th<sup>e</sup> and XVIII<sup>e</sup> centuries, in France an egalitarian liberalism from the 18th century<sup>e</sup>, in Germany social democracy and Nazism in the 19th centuries<sup>e</sup>, in Russia communism. In the same way, then, the access to higher education of 20 to 25% of students per generation led to the eradication of these primary ideologies.

associated with the stage of mass literacy. A new stratification of societies is taking place; the relationship to the written text and to ideology becomes more critical, the word of God, the incantations of the Führer, the instructions of the Party, or even of the parties, cease to be transcendent. Russia reached this threshold between 1985 and 1990 (in the United States, it was around 1965, we will come back to this).

We therefore clearly observe a concomitance between the appearance of middle classes with higher education and the debacle of communism. But that was three or four decades ago. Putin's regime emerged from this crisis, it succeeded communism after the phase of anarchy (rather than liberalism) of the 1990s.

Westerners therefore dream of a double-edged middle class that would take down Putin after having “fallen” from communism. Hence their repeated appeals to the advanced middle classes of large Russian cities. This hope is not completely absurd. It is true that it is in the educated and truly upper classes of Moscow and St. Petersburg that there are the greatest number of Russians hostile to Vladimir Putin. Moreover, these are the same classes and these same cities that supported Boris Yeltsin, the overthrow of the USSR, the darling of the liberal reformers of the Russian economy who came from America in the early 1990s. The beautiful studies of geography election of Alexandre Latsa show that the opposition parties to Putin are actually stronger in the wealthiest neighborhoods of large cities, where the population is most concentrated.

educated<sup>12</sup>.

We could even try to construct a socio-political model which would pit Russia against the West by highlighting different class alignments. On the one hand, a Russian regime which would rely on the working classes and would have marginalized the middle classes. On the other, a Western system in which the upper middle classes allied with the central middle classes



would have succeeded in marginalizing working-class <sup>13</sup>. But one circles, such a representation makes too little of what distinguishes the Russian middle classes from their Western counterparts. While the Russian middle classes are certainly a little more liberal than the rest of the population, they are far from being completely similar to the Western middle classes. The fact that they produce many more engineers has already revealed this to us. Their difference is anchored in a singular anthropological background, which is also one of the elements explaining the solidity of Russia in the face of the West.

In 1983, I formulated the hypothesis of a link between communism and the peasant community family, observable, not only in Russia, but in China, in Serbia, in Tuscany, in Vietnam, Latvia, Estonia or the interior regions of

Finland <sup>14</sup>. This family type, patrilineal, bringing together the father and his married sons on a farm, conveyed values of authority (of the father over his sons) and equality (of brothers among themselves). In Russia, it had the particularity of being recent, having only reached the peasantry than at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, just like serfdom. It had therefore not yet significantly lowered the status of women, as in China for example. The patrilineal principle is perpetuated symbolically today in Russia by the system of three names: first name, father's name, family name. Vladimir Vladimirovich (Is of Vladimir) Putin; Sergei Viktorovich (son of Viktor) Lavrov. In France, this would give Emmanuel Is of Jean-Michel Macron or Marine Is of Jean-Marie Le Pen. This system is common to all social classes and extends to people who are not of Russian origin. The president of the Russian Central Bank, born into a Tatar family, is called Elvira Sakhipzadovna Nabioullina.

Communism was not born from the fertile brain of Lenin, before being imposed by an active minority; it resulted from the dislocation of the traditional peasant family. The abolition of

serfdom in 1861, urbanization and literacy freed the individual from the stifling community family. But the liberated individual found himself completely disoriented; he looked for substitutes for paternal power in the Party, in the centralized economy, in the KGB. You could say that the KGB was, in a sense, the closest institution to the traditional family because it dealt with people personally, in great detail.

Given this social naturalness of communism in Russian history, it was unlikely that after its collapse, a liberal democracy of alternation, of the Western type, would emerge between Moscow and Vladivostok. The values of authority and equality, observed in the family and then in all of social life during the Soviet era, could not be extinguished in just a few years. My hypothesis seems reasonable and realistic to me. But I will add that it is banal.

## ***Blindness to the diversity of the world***

We must in fact remember that the existence of a specific Russian communitarian temperament, external to politics but capable of influencing it, has long been widely accepted in Western Europe. Let's take Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu's magnificent work, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, the first edition of which dates back to 1881 and the third, expanded, to 1890. Here is what we read there:

In the factory, as in the village, the moujik shows little individualism; his personality readily fades into the community; he is afraid of being alone, he needs to feel united with his peers, to be one with them. The large patriarchal family under the authority of the father or the *elder*, the village communities under the authority of the mir, have, in advance, shaped him for common life, leading to association. As soon as he undertakes work, especially as soon as he leaves his village, the moujik g  
Thus, in particular, of most peasant workers in large factories. They know the strength of association and they form temporary artels among themselves

who, far from their izba and far from their village, serve as their family and community. The artel is their refuge and their support during exile in the factory; thanks to the artel, they feel less isolated and less disoriented. The artel, with its communist tendencies and its solidarity practices, is the spontaneous form, the national form of

<sup>15</sup>  
the association .

So here we find the word “communist”, in 1890, in relation to the Russian people. What France did in the first half of the

III<sup>e</sup> Republic could conceive, we have become incapable of it. When, around the same time, in 1892, we entered into an alliance with Russia, we knew who our partner was: a country with a communitarian, if not communist, temperament, the Empire of the Tsars.

At the risk of surprising even more, I would remind you that Eisenhower's America was aware of a Russian specificity. American cultural anthropology had been put to work on Russian culture. Let us first mention the works of two greats of the discipline: *Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority* by Margaret

Mead (1951) <sup>16</sup> and *The People of Great Russia* by Georey Gorier and

John Rickman (1949) <sup>17</sup> . Gorier was British but a student of Mead. Let us add, for its particularly evocative title, *The Impact of Russian Culture on Soviet Communism* by Dinko

Tomasic (1953) <sup>18</sup> . A beautiful article, dating from 1953, entitled “Culture and World View: A Method or Analysis Applied to Rural Russia” and published in *American Anthropologist*, provides a very clear description of the Russian communal family and the Ukrainian nuclear family. I will use it in the [next chapter](#) to understand what separates Little [and Great Russia. In](#) the midst of the Cold War, America was interested in its adversary and, more generally, did not hold back from searching the cultural depths of nations for the

source of their delays (in Italy) <sup>19</sup> or their quirks

authoritarian (in Germany or Japan) <sup>20</sup> .

The idea then reigned in people's minds that the world was not homogeneous. This provision culminated in the cult (and often criticized) text by Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sabre*, written in 1944-1945 at the request of the army, on the basis

<sup>21</sup>  
of interviews with Japanese prisoners of war. It was necessary to understand the enemy's mentality in order to prepare to occupy the country. This work contributed to admitting that the Japanese were different and to agreeing to maintain the emperor. There was therefore, in the American world system under construction, a tolerance for diversity which was based on a pluralistic American temperament shaped by a reasonable school of anthropology.

I am personally convinced that one of the reasons which made it possible to avoid the Cold War degenerating into war itself is that, if the American leaders consciously thought of themselves as defenders of freedom "in general", against communism "in general", they felt that deep down there was a Russian specificity and that the communist threat was not so "universal" as that. George Kennan, the inventor of the concept of *containment*, was anything but a blind anti-communist: he spoke Russian, he knew and loved Russian culture. The strategy he designed aimed to prevent an armed confrontation. Until his long old age (he died in 2005 at age 101), Kennan never ceased to be indignant at the way in which it had been distorted, in Vietnam or by Reagan. One of his last public positions, in 1997, warned us against an extension of NATO to

<sup>22</sup>  
ballast .

Of course, the United States also experienced McCarthyism, the universalist paranoia that Kennan vomited. But the ambée was brief and limited. For intolerance to unfold in all its splendor, we had to wait for the neoconservatives, these triumphalist heirs of McCarthyism.

It is from the Vietnam War that, in my opinion, the absolute universalization of the communist threat by the

American leaders. Walt Rostow (1916-2003), national security advisor under the administrations of Kennedy and Johnson, was one of the architects of this intellectual decline with his book, *The Stages of Economic Growth. An anti-communist manifesto*,

published in 1960 in <sup>23</sup>. There we find a very fair idea and a English very wrong idea. The very correct idea is that all countries, during their development, go through a dangerous phase during which a political crisis can occur. Rostow associates it with economic development, I attribute it to literacy, but whatever. Then comes the very false idea. It would then be possible to intervene to prevent the political crisis and allow the treated country (by the American army) to move directly to the liberal democracy box. Rostow was one of the hawks of the Vietnam War and the idea behind his work was obviously that communism could spread anywhere.

Vietnam, a country of communitarian families, had a predisposition to communism, which therefore triumphed there despite American intervention. Cambodia, where an archaic nuclear family system dominated but a country so close to Vietnam that it became a war zone, imploded in the Khmer Rouge genocide.

The fact remains that communism, real or gone mad, has not gone any further, neither in Malaysia nor in Thailand, a country of nuclear families.

The current attitude towards Russia – an inability to perceive the Putin regime other than in general terms, a refusal to take into account the existence of a Russian culture which would explain it – therefore results from 'a change in the Western attitude, in stages, from the 1960s. The disappearance of our ability to conceive the diversity of the world prevents us from having a realistic vision of Russia.

It was obvious that post-communist Russia would retain communitarian features despite the adoption of the market economy; that one of these traits would be the existence of a State stronger than elsewhere; that another would be a relationship between this State and the various classes of society different from that which exists in the We

yet another would be the acceptance, to varying degrees, in all classes of society – stronger in working-class circles, more mixed in the middle classes – of a certain form of authoritarianism and aspiration to social homogeneity.

We must also understand that what made Russia solid, what allowed it to preserve its sovereignty in a globalized system, is its spontaneous capacity to prevent the development of absolute individualism (no value judgment in this observation, I speak here as an American anthropologist of the 1950s). There remain in Russia enough community values – authoritarian and egalitarian – for the ideal of a compact nation to survive and for a particular form of patriotism to reappear.

## ***Inequalities but general support for the regime***

The specificity of a direct interaction between power and popular circles in Russia as well as the identification of community mental traces within the upper middle classes should not make us forget that the general principle of hierarchy which has affected all advanced societies between 1960 and 2000 also reached Russia.

The new educational stratification was deployed there beyond the years 1985-1990, when the bar of 20% of higher educated per cohort was crossed and seized the communist ideology. The collapse of the centralized economy, the rush of the most daring and venal fraction of the nomenklatura on state assets in the process of being "privatized", during the Yeltsin era, even produced an explosion of inequalities. and extreme concentration of wealth and income. This concentration, stabilized, became

spread downwards and has favored the emergence of an upper middle class whose economic privileges have nothing to envy of those of its Western counterparts. The World Inequality Database reveals that, before tax, the fraction of income received by the top 1% of the pyramid, then by the next 9%, even exceeds the American equivalents in Russia: in 2021, 24% of income for the 1%. from the top in Russia compared to 19% in the United States, 27% for the next 9% in both Russia and the United States. France, by comparison, benefits from a modest upper and upper middle class: the top 1% receive only 9% of income and the next 9% 22%.

Objective inequality in France is close to the general European balance, in its most democratic version, as observed in the Scandinavian countries.

The Russian middle class, essentially manufactured by communist social transformation and Soviet meritocratic education, enjoys, like the rest of the population, the social peace of the Putin era, which we attest. has seen falling rates of suicide, homicide and deaths from alcoholism. The decline in infant mortality must be seen as the effect and symbol of a peaceful mental and economic atmosphere that had never existed in Russia. Shlapentokh stressed, for his part, that living conditions in Russia had never been as good, including freedom, as under Putin.

The upper middle classes therefore accepted the regime, just as the oligarchs gave up any desire to exercise autonomous power. The arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky in October 2003 was an opportunity for the state and the oligarchs to put things straight. Putin left them their money, and only their money. In truth, the word “oligarch”, which includes the notion of power (*arkhè*), no longer correctly describes Russian reality. It is amusing to note that the hunt for Russian “oligarchs” launched in the West since the start of the invasion of Ukraine has generalized across the Atlantic the notion of a truly oligarchic America.

Her oligarchs can, unlike their Russian colleagues, intervene, and massively as we will see, in the American political system.

The “Putin system” is stable because it is the product of Russian history and not the work of one man. The dream that obsesses Washington of an anti-Putin uprising is indeed just a dream, stemming from the refusal of Westerners to see that living conditions have improved under his reign and to recognize the specificity of Russian political culture. I now come to Russia's real fragility: its demographics.

## ***The rare man's strategy***

If only the elements listed so far existed, we could predict that Russia would do more than resist the West; we should consider the possibility of a new imperialism.

But Russia has a fundamental weakness, which is its low fertility, a trait that it actually shares with the rest of the most developed world. Between 1995 and 2000, during the dark years, fertility fell to 1.35 children per woman. It rose to 1.8 in 2016 before stabilizing at 1.5. This development suggests a decline in the overall population which has already begun, even if it is, for the moment, compensated by annexations of territories and populations which belonged to Ukraine. In 2021, Russia had 146 million inhabitants.

According to UN projections, there will be only 143 million in 2030 and 126 million in 2050. If we examine the age pyramid in 2020, on the eve of the war, and particularly the population likely to be enlisted, men aged 35-39 were 6 million, those aged 30-34, 6.3 million, those aged 25-



29 years old, 4.6 million, and those aged 20-24, 3.6 million. These are not projections, but real, current figures. Russia has entered a phase of contraction of its potentially mobilizable male population: by 40% for these age groups. This is the reason why talking about a conquering Russia, capable of invading Europe after it has destroyed Ukraine, is fantasy or propaganda. The truth is that Russia, with a decreasing population and an area of 17 million square kilometers, far from wanting to conquer new territories, is mainly wondering how it will continue to occupy those it already possesses.

Concern about the demographic situation is omnipresent in the speeches of Putin and other regime actors in general. It explains a military strategy often misunderstood by our media, or too well understood but hidden from the public.

readers and listeners <sup>24</sup>. The dominant discourse equates Putin with Stalin. But under Stalin, men were abundant, Russia was experiencing demographic expansion (even if fertility had started to decline around 1928), and the Red Army could therefore sacrifice men by the millions, as it did during the Second World War. . Current Russian military doctrine, on the contrary, arises from the observation that man has become rare. This is one of the reasons why Russia entered Ukraine with only 120,000 troops. The Russians very obviously underestimated their adversary (we will see why in the [next chapter](#)) but nevertheless conquered, it must be admitted, a substantial fraction of Ukrainian territory along the Black Sea. Contrary to what we heard everywhere, the Russian army chose to wage a slow war to save men. The important role played by the Chechen regiments and the Wagner militia during the first stages of the conflict is the result of this choice, as are the partial, progressive mobilizations carried out sparingly.

The Russians' priority is not to seize as much territory as possible but to lose a minimum of men. When

Ukrainian counter-offensive in the fall of 2022, carried out after a massive mobilization, the Russians, finding themselves one against three, preferred to abandon in the East the part of the Kharkiv oblast that they controlled, and in the South retreat without fighting to the left bank of the Dnieper. General Sourovikin, who made this decision, explained that the war would be won otherwise than by needlessly sacrificing men. The war has since intensified and human losses have followed, on both sides. We have no credible figures either from the Ukrainians or the Russians.

The end of the conflict will allow us to draw up a realistic assessment and I think that most historians are waiting with curiosity to know the number of dead and wounded on both sides.

Since the fall of the USSR and the disintegration of what was their empire, the Russians know that, faced with NATO, whose population, so to speak, was 887 million in 2023, they are no longer doing the weight (I did not count Turkey, which we no longer really know where it stands diplomatically). The Russian army has therefore, in stages, denied a new military doctrine which, in addition to the imperative of saving men, presents a capital change. Based on quantitative superiority in conventional means, Soviet doctrine ruled out launching a first nuclear strike. The new doctrine, taking into account human poverty, authorizes tactical nuclear strikes if the Russian nation and state are threatened.

Westerners must take the warning seriously.

It is, I believe, a direct Polish military intervention that the Russian leaders feared above all else, because the mass of Poland would have forced them to a complete mobilization and therefore to a militarization of society which would have made them lose control. benefit of the civil peace found under Putin. One of the characteristics of Russian diplomatic and military practice (as opposed to that of the United States) is the reliability of its commitments.

Thus, Russia was committed to defending Bashar al-Assad; he turned out to be a butcher, whose case seemed hopeless. But the

Russia did not shirk and deployed troops in Syria from September 2015. If it has theorized the possibility of tactical nuclear strikes in the event of a direct threat to its sovereignty, NATO must take this for granted. She will keep her promise. These are sinister considerations, I recognize, but our leaders have made too many ill-considered decisions in this war and our priority as citizens is therefore to ensure that they know the doctrine of the Russian army better than they do. did not know the reaction capacity of Russian banks in the event that they were disconnected from Swift.

## ***Five years to win the war***

The Russians declared NATO in February 2022 because they felt ready. Since 2018-2019, as we have said, they have had hypersonic missiles which give them indisputable superiority, including over the United States; they can, as they have proven, be cut off from Swift. Things, moreover, went better for them than expected, because many countries, including some very important ones, finding that they were resistant to the first shock and no longer supporting American supervision themselves, continued to trade with them and, in fact, supported them (more on this in [Chapter 11](#)). But if a “window of opportunity” has opened for Russia in 2022, it will also close.

As much as Putin, the Americans are aware of Russia's demographic problem, and we can even say that it was the basis of their strategic error. The prospect of Russia's population shrinking while theirs continues to grow has contributed to the contempt with which they have treated Russian protests against NATO expansion. Washington strategists, who now appear to be making the same mistake

**vis-à-vis China, have fallen into the trap of what I will call demography. They have forgotten that a State whose population has a high educational and technological level, even if it decreases, does not immediately lose its military power.**

**The increase in educational and technological levels initially compensates for and beyond the decline in population.**

**Russian leaders are lucid; and preserving the sovereignty of their country is for them a moral requirement. Let's try to put ourselves in their place. They know their population will decline.**

**What do they deduce from this? Not, as the Americans thought, that it would be madness to attack, but that, this decline only becoming dangerous in the medium and long term, we must act as quickly as possible, because later, it will be too late . The pace of population contraction suggests that, in their view, the conflict must be resolved within five years. Afterwards, very small classes will arrive and mobilization, military and civil, will become very difficult.**

**So far, the Russians have taken their time; their entry into the war was gradual. To limit human losses. To preserve the fundamental achievements of the Putin era, the return to stability, guaranteeing a decent existence for all. At the current stage, the strategic calculation that I imagined seems to have been judicious: the months pass, the industrial and therefore military deficiencies of the Westerners have been revealed, one after the other. Today, time is on the side of Moscow. But we also know that the Russians do not have eternity ahead of them, and that they will have to achieve a definitive victory in five years. They must therefore defeat Ukraine and defeat NATO within a limited time frame, without ever allowing them to gain time, through negotiations, truces or, worse, by freezing the conflict. Washington must no longer have any illusions: Moscow wants victory, nothing less.**

**I admit, however, that in the eyes of Westerners my model presents a weakness: it assumes that Vladimir Putin is intelligent.**

1. I thank Olivier Berruyer for making me understand that it was necessary to make this hypothesis: the Western elites were sincere.
2. D. Teurtrie, *Russia, op. cit.*, p. 84.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 187-188.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
9. Personal note from Jacques Sapir, whom I sincerely thank for answering my questions.
10. James K. Galbraith, "The Gift of Sanctions: An Analysis of Assessments of the Russian Economy, 2022-2023," *Institute for New Economic Thinking Working Paper*,  
not 204, April 10, 2023.
11. OECD data.
12. *Dissonance. Diary of a Frussian*, <https://alexandrelatsa.ru>. See "Elections" sections.
13. This is an error that I made in my column for the *Marianne* newspaper of April 20, 2023, "Macronism and Putinism, a sociological comparison".
14. See Emmanuel Todd, *The Third Planet. Family structures and ideological systems*, Seuil, 1983.
15. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, Robert Laont, "Bouquins", 1991, p. 445.
16. Margaret Mead, *Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Problems of Soviet Character*, Rand Corporation, 1951.
17. Georey Gorer and John Rickman, *The People of Great Russia. A Psychological Study*, London, The Cresset Press, 1949.
18. Dinko Tomasic, *The Impact of Russian Culture on Soviet Communism*, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1953.
19. Edward Baneld, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1958.
20. Bertram Schaner, *Fatherland. A Study of Authoritarianism in the German Family*, Columbia University Press, 1948 and Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Boston, Houghton Miin, 1946.
21. Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sabre*, Picquier, 1987.
22. See the article published on September 30, 2016 on Kennan in the *Smithsonian Magazine* : "George Kennan's Love of Russia Inspired His Legendary "Containment" Strategy".
23. WW Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Seuil, 1962.

**24.** Personally knowing many journalists from Le *Monde*, L' *Express*, Le *Point*, French state radio, and elsewhere, I basically think that the hypothesis of incompetence in demographic and military matters is more likely. than that of conscious dissimulation. It is out of courtesy that I mention this poss

## CHAPTER 2

### ***The Ukrainian enigma***

The purpose of this chapter is not to retrace the history of Ukraine, nor to offer a complete description of the country at any given date, but to answer a question: how did a society that everyone perceived to be was it able to resist the Russian military offensive so well?

Let's start by assessing the events on their proper scale. In shock, the commentators, who were on repeat on the television sets, persisted in talking about a "high intensity" war. When all is gone, the dead will undoubtedly number in the hundreds of thousands. But such mortality would in fact only deny a war of medium intensity if we compare it to those experienced by Europe. When we count the military and civilian losses of the First or Second World War, the unit of account is the million men. On this scale, Ukrainian losses are only a tenth of those in these truly high-intensity wars.

Let us remember, again, that the Russians only entered Ukraine with at most 120,000 men.

The fact remains that they very probably expected either a surrender or the collapse of the Ukrainian regime, and

certainly not to resistance to the first shock, followed by a desire to reconquer the lost territories of the South and the East, not simply occupied by the Russian army, but populated either by Russians (Donbass and Crimea), or in majority of Russian speakers (mainly Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts). The Americans themselves were surprised by Ukraine's resistance. Busy re-equipping and reorganizing the army, they had announced that the Russian invasion was imminent, then scampered off like rabbits, undoubtedly trained by their experience in Kabul in the art of evacuation.

If Russians and informed Westerners were so surprised, it was because they considered Ukraine to be a *failed state*, a failed state, or a *failed state* in the making. What she was. Even more than Russia, it had failed in its exit from the Soviet system. Between 1991 and 2021, its population fell from 52 million inhabitants to 41, a drop of more than 20%. Because, first of all, fertility has fallen even lower than in Russia: in 2015-2020, when Russian fertility was at 1.8, it was in Ukraine at 1.4; and, in 2020, while in Russia it was 1.5, it was in Ukraine 1.2. Because, above all, of emigration. The flight of part of the population towards Russia or Western Europe meant that the system was unable to find a long-term balance.

Let us recall, after so many other analysts, corruption, the oligarchs. Let us add to this a less frequently used indicator of social decomposition, surrogacy practiced for profit. GPA cannot under any circumstances be used to pit East and West, North and South, against each other from the angle of moral values: around 2016, it was authorized in a large majority of the States which constitute the United States. United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, India, Russia and Ukraine, and banned in most countries of the European Union. It remains that on the eve of the war Ukraine had become an El Dorado for surrogacy <sup>1</sup>. She held 25% on the world market thanks to very competitive rates. This



economic specialization testifies to its integration into globalization and the West since it was (and still is, as we will see) renting Ukrainian bodies to produce Western children. If the request for GPA comes from the rich countries of the West, Ukraine's willingness to accept this procedure (also legal in Russia but now prohibited to foreign clients) also seems the legacy of a certain Soviet casualness towards vis-à-vis the natural person. Consider abortion, used throughout the USSR as a standard birth control technique. Favorable to the freedom of abortion, I consider its ban as symmetrically barbaric for its use as a preferred birth control technique. As for GPA giving rise to a financial transaction, I admit that I am not in favor of it for reasons of common morality and I consider that this economic specialization is a sign of social decomposition.

In Ukraine, it is a synthesis of neoliberalism and Sovietism.

The war did little to slow down the phenomenon. An article published on July 26, 2023 in the *Guardian* told us that “more than 1,000 children [were] born to surrogate mothers in Ukraine since the start of the Russian invasion, including 600 in the BioTexCom clinic in Kiev, one of the most important in Europe. Despite the conflict, Western demand does not fade and cannot be fully satisfied. The *Guardian*, which clearly considers that this economic dynamism proves the vitality of Ukrainian society, noted that the spouses or companions of many surrogate mothers were at the front. He gave the floor to a certain Dana who, carrying the child of an Italian couple, said she was only doing it for “financial benefits”. It is indeed the compatibility of the British and Ukrainian moral systems in the age of neoliberalism which makes the description of economic exchange natural here. These spouses sent to the front bring us back to the military question.

In order to clarify the mystery of Ukraine's resistance, a second one must be resolved: the disappearance, after the Maidan revolution in 2014 (the Maidan coup d'état, according to the Russians), of Russian-speaking Ukraine. as an autonomous political force in the Ukrainian system. Ukraine, in fact, was not just a failed state, it was a plural state, with a complex and problematic ethnolinguistic composition. However, from 2014, its Russian-speaking part suddenly disappeared from the political scene and it was a homogeneous Ukraine which showed itself capable of resisting the Russians. The phenomenon is all the more surprising given that the Russian language, certainly hounded by the nationalist government of Kiev which withdrew its official status in the Russian-speaking provinces, was still the language of culture on a national scale, equal to German, French or English, Ukrainian being rather comparable to Amand in the relative richness of the literary and scientific heritage of which it is the vector.

## ***Ukraine is not Russia***

There is a uniquely Ukrainian culture, in the deep sense that anthropology gives to this expression, including family life and the organization of kinship. Ukraine is not Russia. To verify it, the safest thing is to start from testimonies

prior to the turbulence of the 20th century<sup>e</sup> century, later data not being as reliable because some have been distorted to justify ideological positions.

Let us therefore return to the book by Leroy-Beaulieu, cited in [the previous chapter](#) about the Russian "communist" family. This is how he describes the family in Little Russia, which roughly corresponded to present-day central Ukraine but did not include the territories of "New Russia" (in Russian terminology).

XIX<sup>e</sup> century), which border the Black Sea: “The contrast is still visible in the family and in the commune, in the house and in the villages of the two tribes. Among the Little Russians, the individual is more independent, the woman more free, the family less crowded; the houses are more spaced apart, and often surrounded by gardens and  
eurs<sup>2</sup> . »

Towards the end of the 19th century<sup>e</sup> century, at the time of the tsars, the Ukrainian family was clearly distinguished from the Russian family by its individualism and a higher status of women, two traits which, according to my model associating family systems with political ideologies, suggest a Ukrainian culture more favorable to liberal democracy and more apt for debate than Russian culture.

Later and more technical studies confirm this diagnosis. The *American Anthropologist* article , also mentioned in the [previous chapter](#), could be less reliable because it dates from the Cold War. But at that time, Americans accepted the idea of cultural diversity and analyzed national differences with serenity. Among the three communities studied in this article, two were then Great Russians, located in Russia, and the third was composed of Ukrainians, but moved a little towards the East, not far from Voronezh, which is currently in Russia. As might be expected, in the case of Great Russian communities, there is a variant of the undivided family associating the father and his sons. The average household size was, in one, 6.5 members (in 1877) and, in the other, 6.2 (in 1864-1869). In contrast, in the community populated by Ukrainians, the average household size fell to 4.7 members (in 1879). The difference is considerable and any current analyst of family structures would not fail to point out that we are dealing here with two different family types.

The article does not say it but it is likely that this Little Russian family was nevertheless included in a system of links

patrilineal relationships. Associations between men, outside the household, must have been important. This is suggested by the method of naming which, in Ukrainian, is the same as in Russian and specifies the father's first name: X, Is of Y, then last name. In Russia, as we have seen, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin. In Ukraine, Ihor Volodymyrovych Klymenko (at the time of writing, Minister of the Interior, born in kyiv).

What about in more recent times? Reliable work is lacking. The anthropology of the Soviet era was not very interested in these questions and, above all, the practice of communal apartments made the analysis of households quite difficult in urban areas. However, we must know whether the Ukrainian nuclear family system is fully free of kinship, as are the French or English nuclear systems. In this case, it would clearly belong to the West. But if it were a nuclear system inserted into a patrilineal kinship system, it would be closer to the steppe family system as it existed between the Hunnic and Mongol eras. This is a question I don't have a sure answer to. It is not impossible that in Little Russia today the system is truly nuclear, even if the persistence of the method of naming which specifies the father's name casts doubt on this point. In the southern regions of Ukraine, corresponding to the former Cossack territories, on the other hand, a Mongolian type system must predominate. It is often said that the Cossacks were the origins of the first Ukrainian state. Now, Cossack, it's Kazakh, it's the world of the steppe.

My attention was drawn to this question by reports which appeared recently in the English press. Their aim was clearly to arouse in us a benevolent emotion by describing fathers who went to join their sons in their military unit or brothers who fought together, two combinations typical of a flexible patrilineal system.

Another element suggests that Ukrainian culture remains patrilineal: the ultra-“gendered” exodus (as they say

today in the West) of the populations, all the men having to go to the front and the women (or many of them at least) having to go abroad. This sorting carried out according to sex, with such clarity and such a spirit of decision, denotes a patrilineal culture operating at full capacity; but, let us repeat, a flexible, nuclear patrilineal culture more conducive to liberal democracy than the compact, Russian community system, a patrilineal culture of the Mongolian type. There is no irony in this designation: current Mongolia has by definition inherited the Mongolian family system and is one of the rare authentic democracies in the post-Soviet space. A mystery for contemporary political science, but one that my model associating family and ideology allows us to unravel.

Finally, the last symptom of a patrilineal culture, homophobia, almost as strong in Ukraine as in Russia although the current leaders are trying to eradicate it with laws inspired by the LGBT doctrine – to accelerate the integration of Ukraine to

the West obviously <sup>3</sup>.

## ***An ancient national feeling***

To understand the national truth of today, it is better, once again, to go back to pre-Soviet times. Concerning the political temperament of Ukraine, we are fortunate to have the results of the November 1917 elections to the Constituent Assembly. This was the only time when the inhabitants of the empire were able to express themselves freely before the end of communism, because in January 1918 the Bolsheviks, unhappy at being in the minority, dissolved this assembly. In *Russia Goes to the Polls*, Oliver Radkey analyzed the outcome of these elections in

descending to the level of the oblasts <sup>4</sup>. Geographic distribution

indicates that the Bolshevik party was particularly powerful in northwest Russia, the epicenter of the communal family.

In Ukraine in 1917 there existed Ukrainian parties which were not necessarily counter-revolutionary, for example Socialist-Revolutionaries distinct from Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries. The total score of completely Ukrainian parties speaks for itself. In Kyiv province: 77%. In Podolia: 79%. In Volhynia: 70%.

In Poltava province: 66%. In Chernigov province: 51%. But in the regions which remained predominantly Russian-speaking on the eve of Maidan, the score of specifically Ukrainian parties was lower. In the province of Ekaterinoslav, a city later named Dnepropetrovsk and currently Dnipro, it falls to 46%. In Kherson province, 10%. In the Tauride province, which corresponds to the Crimean peninsula and the continental area just to the north, also 10%. In the Kharkiv province, it goes down to 0.3%.

These numbers are those of the Ukrainian parties which presented themselves alone to the electorate. They do not take into account Ukrainian parties associated with "Russian" parties on common lists.

We therefore verified from the 1917 elections, simultaneously, the existence of a Ukrainian, "Little Russian" specificity, and a secondary specificity in "New Russia". In the center of the country, scores above 70% of Ukrainian parties leave no doubt about the existence of a Ukrainian identity since the revolution of 1917. But at the time, feeling Ukrainian was not, according to Radkey, be anti-Russian. The existence of common lists indicates that a century ago peaceful coexistence was possible.

*A martyred and then privileged country*

These data concern Ukraine after tsarism. However, like all the other components of the Soviet sphere, Ukraine subsequently suffered upheavals of a scale that is difficult to conceive. The violence of its economic evolution between 1917 and 1960 is hardly comparable to that of the British Isles between 1780 and 1850, during the industrial revolution.

It cannot be a coincidence that the two great famines of recent European history, between 1842 and 1845 in Ireland, between 1931 and 1933 in Ukraine, occurred respectively in the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, two spheres of experimentation radical social.

There is a lot of talk today about the Holodomor, the Ukrainian part of the great Soviet famine which also devastated Kazakhstan. We can completely interpret it, if we want to, as an aggression directed against the Ukrainian peasant nation by Stalin (he wanted to destroy the kulaks, the supposedly rich peasants), and it is normal that this event fueled a persistent resentment. In the same way, the Great Irish Famine explains an important part of the resentment of the Irish against England.

The irony is that these two famines were caused or sublimated by ideologies of opposite meanings: a delusional state collectivism in the case of Ukraine, a moralizing liberalism which refused to allow the State to intervene in the case of Ukraine. Ireland. But let's be fair, we must once again admit the superiority of liberalism, which has killed more effectively in Ireland than collectivism in Ukraine. The Great Irish Famine claimed 1 million lives out of 8.5 million inhabitants, or 12% of the population. The great famine in Ukraine left 2.6 million

31 million, or 8.5% losses <sup>5</sup>.

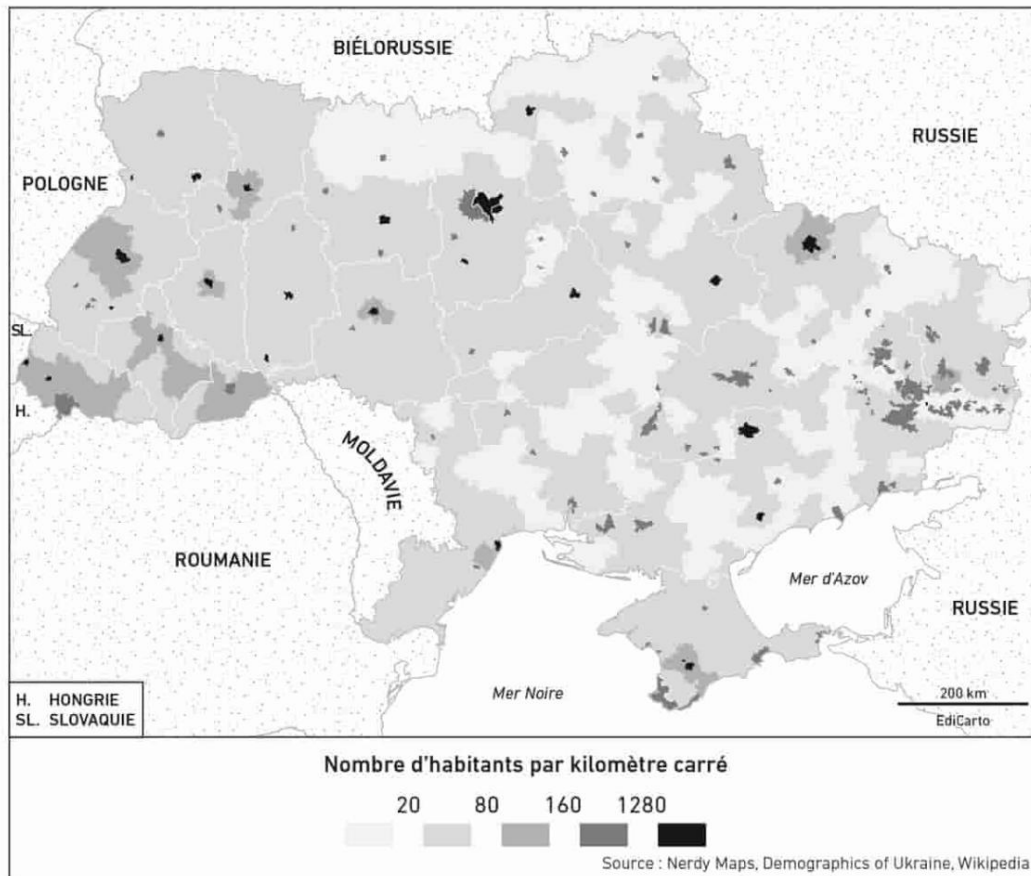
It would be a mistake, however, to stop Ukraine's history at the Holodomor. If the country was indeed martyred by Stalin as a peasant nation, it was, on the contrary, after the Second World War, favored by the regime. Ukraine then became, in

**USSR, one of the priority development zones of industry, including the most modern – aerospace and military. This allows us to understand the map of urbanization as it appeared on the eve of independence in 1991.**



Map 2.1  
THE URBAN NETWORK IN UKRAINE IN 2001



**Map 2.2****POPULATION DENSITY IN UKRAINE TOWARDS 2020**

The map of population densities shows higher ones in the West and the East, with a less populated Center except for the Kiev agglomeration. But the high densities of the East and West take two different forms. In the East, we observe the existence of real urban centers, while in the West, in regions attached to the Soviet Union after the Second World War and which had been Austro-Hungarian or Polish, the countryside is more populated, and there is only one town of some importance, Lviv (Lvov, Lemberg). Apart from Kyiv, the major cities of Ukraine at the time of independence were Odessa

urban areas located in the South and East regions which are also those where Russophony was most present.

The number of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants increased, between 1959 and 1979, from 25 to 46. Ukraine before independence was thus one of the regions of the USSR which had progressed the most, even if she had finally found herself, like the others, caught in the system's blockage. It was not a region undergoing Russification. Faced with the Ukrainian language and identity, the communist regime hesitated a little. But in the USSR as a whole, the Leninist theory of respect for national cultures and a principled hostility to what Lenin himself called "Great Russian chauvinism" had prevailed; and this, despite the brakes imposed on national autonomy from 1935 because it was nevertheless realized that the use of several languages in the army was not very convenient. In 1991, a Ukrainian culture and language existed and developed, but at the upper level of society, high culture and administration were expressed in Russian.

### ***A nation without a state***

The fact remains that this Ukraine, which was rather well treated in the later phase of the Soviet Union, had never managed to develop its own state, never been what we call a nation-state. It is this country which, in the panic caused by the liquidation of the USSR by Russia itself, decided by referendum, in 1991, to be independent.

For a nation-state to be born, let us remember, a common culture and, most often, a common language are necessary; neither the existence of a peasantry or a working class is known; are also essential for the middle classes concentrated in cities. The urban network and the middle classes that populate it constitute

the human framework of the State, its physiological system. Because the State cannot be just a concept, an idea or even an organizational chart; it is, absolutely, but it is also a group of real individuals endowed with skills, the most organized of whom reside in cities and form that fraction of the middle classes which is animated by a certain degree of collective consciousness. However, the middle classes had been lacking in Ukraine, which was under-urbanized until Soviet industrialization.

Between 1991 and 2014, the country failed to find its balance, even though the mental crisis caused by the exit from communism seemed less violent than in Russia, as shown by life expectancy indicators, suicide, homicide or death from alcoholism. The homicide rate, for example, only rose between 1990 and 1996 from 7 to 15 per 100,000 inhabitants, while it rose from 14 to 34 between 1990 and 1995 in Russia. At the end of the communist era, Ukraine, by any development indicator, was doing a little better than Russia.

Clearly more brutal than that of Central Europe, Ukrainian culture was therefore, at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, significantly less so than that of Russia. However, we cannot attribute this gap to the nuclear family since Belarus, the absolute pole of family communitarianism in Europe, was even less violent than Ukraine. When the exit crisis from communism began, the Ukrainian homicide rate was 2.5 times lower than that of Russia, but that of

Belarus was three times less <sup>6</sup>. The regional diversity of homicide rates in Russia suggests that ethnic heterogeneity plays a role. On the scale of the old Russia of the tsars, Belarus and Ukraine were basically only provinces, simple spaces, despite the differences between Ukrainian speakers and Russian speakers in Ukraine, a region basically more culturally homogeneous than This is today's multi-ethnic Russia, where Russians themselves only make up 80% of the population.

So why didn't a liberal democracy develop in a Ukraine that was a little more peaceful and advanced than Russia, and where family tradition was nevertheless favorable? I will not attempt here to develop a general theory of the emergence of the State according to the family type and will content myself with noting that neither in Ukraine nor elsewhere a nuclear family background, if it actually promotes pluralism, does not induce, in itself, the advent of a State, and even less a liberal and democratic State. The gestation of a State is a long and complex process. I would tend to think that no state can be born liberal and democratic; that always an authoritarian phase – monarchy, tyranny – precedes its takeover by the people. This is how things happened in Athens, England and France. How could Ukraine, with its weak and immature middle classes, Russian-speaking at their highest, reasonably have, in the absence of state tradition, transformed into a “Ukrainian” liberal democracy between 1991 and 2014?

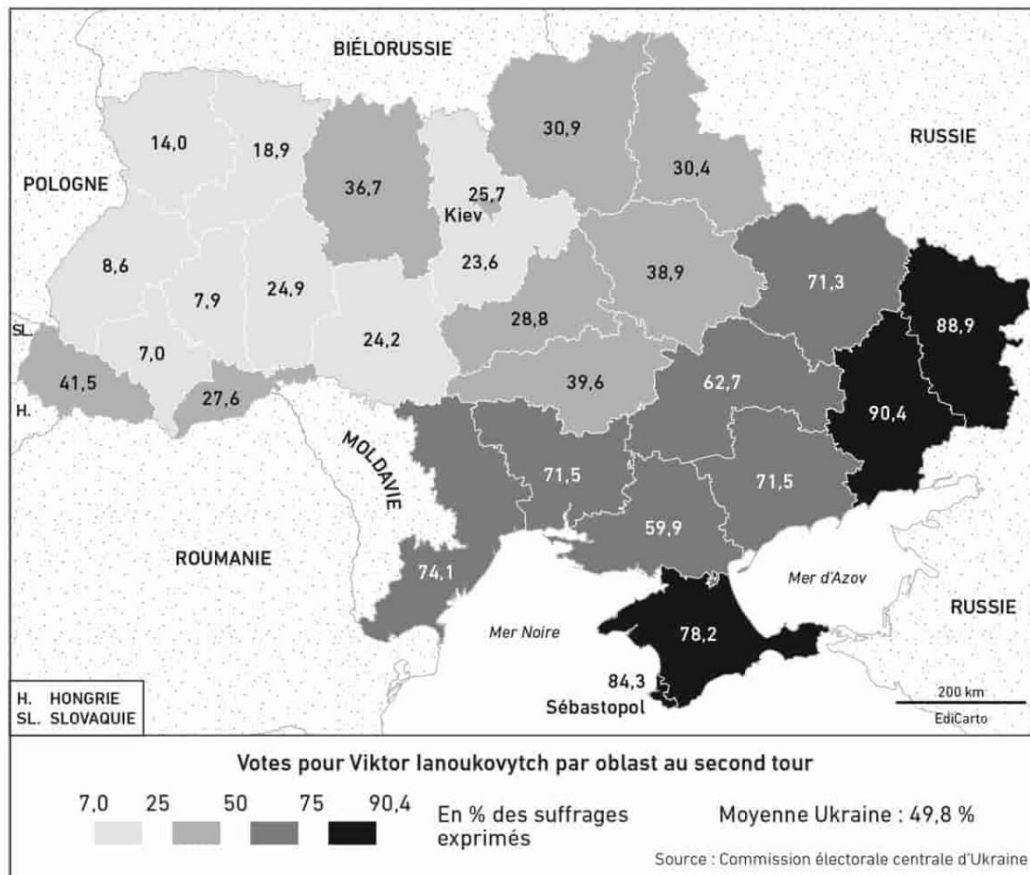
In such a context, the individualistic temperament associated with the nuclear family could produce little more than anarchy. What happened.

During the years 1990-2014, elections were held there. There was unparalleled pluralism in Russia but the state framework remained decent. During the same period, Russia experienced a very violent phase of unrest, followed by the reappearance of an authoritarian state; the population has rallied around Putin's regime. In Ukraine, no comparable unrest, but no restoration of order either. While Putin was subduing the oligarchs in 2003, nothing of the sort happened in Ukraine. According to Anders Åslund, an author officially working to spread Western influence in Ukraine, in no other country in the post-Soviet space have the oligarchs had such social and

political <sup>7</sup>. Control of the gas trade (and I add: industrial branches of Eastern Ukraine) was the basis of their power. They were not just participating in general corruption

of the political system, but also helped to maintain its pluralism. Åslund reports how the oligarchs who own the television channels denounced the megalomaniac behavior of President Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych, from whom Maidan caused the flight in 2014. – Megalomaniac, certainly corrupt and corrupt, but still normally elected four years earlier.

The Ukrainian population's aptitude for pluralism resulted partly from the individualistic temperament fostered by the nuclear family and partly, as we have just seen, from the activity of uncontrolled oligarchs. But it also stemmed, inevitably, from the ethno-linguistic duality of the country. There existed, side by side, a Ukrainian-speaking Ukraine and a more Russian-speaking Ukraine, determined to remain, in one way or another, linked to Russia.

**Map 2.3****THE 2010 UKRAINIAN ELECTIONS: VOTES FOR  
YANUKOVYTCH**

The existence of these two Ukraines appears with an almost disconcerting simplicity on the map of the 2010 elections. This highlights a western and central Ukraine which voted for Petro Oleksiovych Poroshenko and a southern and eastern Ukraine which voted for Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovich. The differences are considerable: the provinces of Donetsk, Lugansk and Crimea voted respectively 90.44%, 88.96% and 78.24% in favor of Yanukovich while in those of Lviv, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk, the West, its scores were only 8.60%, 7.92% and 7.02%.

If the West is Ukrainian-speaking and the East Russian-speaking, it is important to keep in mind that the distinction by language is not always operational. Assessments for the percentage of Russian speakers, Ukrainian speakers and people speaking a dialect mixing the two languages are now so steeped in ideology that they have ceased to be reliable. This electoral map is much more effective. It makes it possible to distinguish at a glance the rather Russophile Ukraine from the simply Ukrainian Ukraine.

Let's return to the anarchic state of the country. To explain it, we highlighted the nuclear family, the oligarchs and ethno-linguistic duality. None of these factors is sufficient in itself: France, a country with a nuclear family in its central part, has become the very model of the nation-state; Russia has succeeded in subduing its oligarchs; and there are nation-states where ethno-linguistic diversity is much more pronounced than in Ukraine. Finally, let us add that Ukraine, at the time of the fall of communism, was a country located on the periphery of the Soviet Union where the local leaders of the Communist Party were sub-meritocrats who had failed to “climb” to Moscow. , failed provincials of the Soviet system in short. This last element allows us to understand why this regional “elite” experienced some difficulty in adapting to the liberal change starting from Moscow and Saint Petersburg. But we must also go beyond this cyclical phenomenon to understand the weakness of the emerging Ukrainian state. The reason fundamental to its failure seems to me to have been the general weakness of the urban middle classes.

They were few in number in the West, which remained more rural. This West is the most nationalist region of Ukraine, the one whose populations had only been attached to the Soviet Union from 1945, often of Uniate religion (Orthodox having

joined the Catholic Church at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century). This West was the most likely a priori to defend a Ukrainian nation-state project, but its middle classes were weak.



In the more urbanized East, the middle classes were more numerous but it is easy to understand that they were too Russophiles to think and act vigorously in the name of a Ukrainian nation-state. In the East, however, the ultimate truth is more unexpected and simpler: the middle classes of the East have emigrated to Russia.

### ***The real mystery: the decline of Russian-speaking Ukraine***

Here we get to the heart of the Ukrainian conundrum, which is not just that Ukraine was incapable of becoming a nation-state. This failure can be explained, all in all, quite easily by the weakness of the urban network in the Ukrainian-speaking areas; by the fact that the high culture was Russian and that the Ukrainian-speaking, nationalist areas wanted to speak another language. A nation that is too peasant and unable to give birth to a state is not very surprising: we have seen many others in history.

The most curious thing is that after Maidan in 2014, Russian-speaking, or Russophile, Ukraine disappeared as a political agent autonomous.

The strange fate of the Russian town of Belgorod, today sporadically bombarded by the Ukrainian army, puts us on the trail of an explanation.

In 2017, the French Embassy in Moscow, in the person of <sup>8</sup> Pascal Cauchy has produced a map of doctoral studies in the Russian Federation over the previous five years, based on statistics published by the Ministry of Higher Education. In all universities across the country, the number of doctoral students was declining or stagnating. On the other hand, two regions of Russia saw their numbers increase significantly:

republic of Chechnya and the Belgorod region. In the first case, the increase resulted from the prestige policy led by Ramzan Akhmadovich Kadyrov, head of the Chechen Republic, a Putin man, very active in the war today. In Belgorod, the increase was due to a migration of students from neighboring Kharkiv, the large university city of Ukraine, in sharp economic and academic decline, while its university, one of the first founded in Russia, in 1804, was renowned for the quality of its engineering studies.

The removal of the Russian-speaking part of Ukraine as an autonomous political agent was not anticipated, I think, by the Russian leaders, even if they are surely aware of it today. Their most likely scenario was quite different: as Ukraine failed to find its balance while Russia restarted, one could assume that it would turn to the latter to join it. After all, Ukrainian industries operating in cutting-edge sectors, including aviation, aerospace and military, were linked to Russia and located mainly in the east of the country.

I am convinced that the Russians made this calculation; and this is undoubtedly one of the reasons why, at the time of the explosion of the Soviet Union, they let Ukraine gain its “independence” without asking for a rectification of the borders to recover the Russian or Russian-speaking populations of the new state. The persistence of a Russian component was to ensure Russia's eternal hold on Ukraine. The Russian or Russian-speaking population would have served as a link.

This vision turned out to be too simple. The linguistic factor did not play out in the expected way. Because if the Ukrainian system is fighting for its survival, many individuals and families are undermining it by fighting for theirs. Concerning Kharkiv, these were young Russian speakers who wanted to continue to progress intellectually using their mother tongue, one of the great languages of European culture, rather than a dialect

of recent peasant origin. More generally, members of the Russian-speaking middle classes, facing hostility from Ukrainian-speaking nationalists, in a society in decline, and who saw Russia prospering, emigrated. By waging war against the Russian language, the nationalists probably sought as much or more to drive out Russian speakers as to convert them to the use of their own.

Since the start of the war, there has been a lot of talk in the West about Ukrainians emigrating to the European Union. The specialists should also have informed us about the existence of an older and continuous migratory flow towards Russia which mainly affected the middle classes but also undoubtedly skilled industrial workers.

This socially differentiated exodus towards the Russian pole of attraction is demonstrable if we keep in mind the link that exists between the middle classes and the urban system. He knew how to look at the map illustrating the evolution of Ukraine's urban centers.

Between 1989 and 2010, we noted stability in urban populations, even a certain dynamism, in western Ukraine and in the western half of central Ukraine, areas, it should be remembered, which were initially poorly urbanized and poorly populated by the middle classes. But the crucial phenomenon is observable in eastern Ukraine, where many cities have lost more than 20% of their population even beyond the clearly Russian-speaking part of the country. This is the real crisis in Ukrainian society, not just the fragile Ukrainian-speaking middle classes but the disappearance of the Russian-speaking middle classes. This urban Ukraine, let us note, is not only that of the middle classes, it is also that of the oligarchs who, at the time, had not yet been subdued. They seem to have been there since the start of the war.

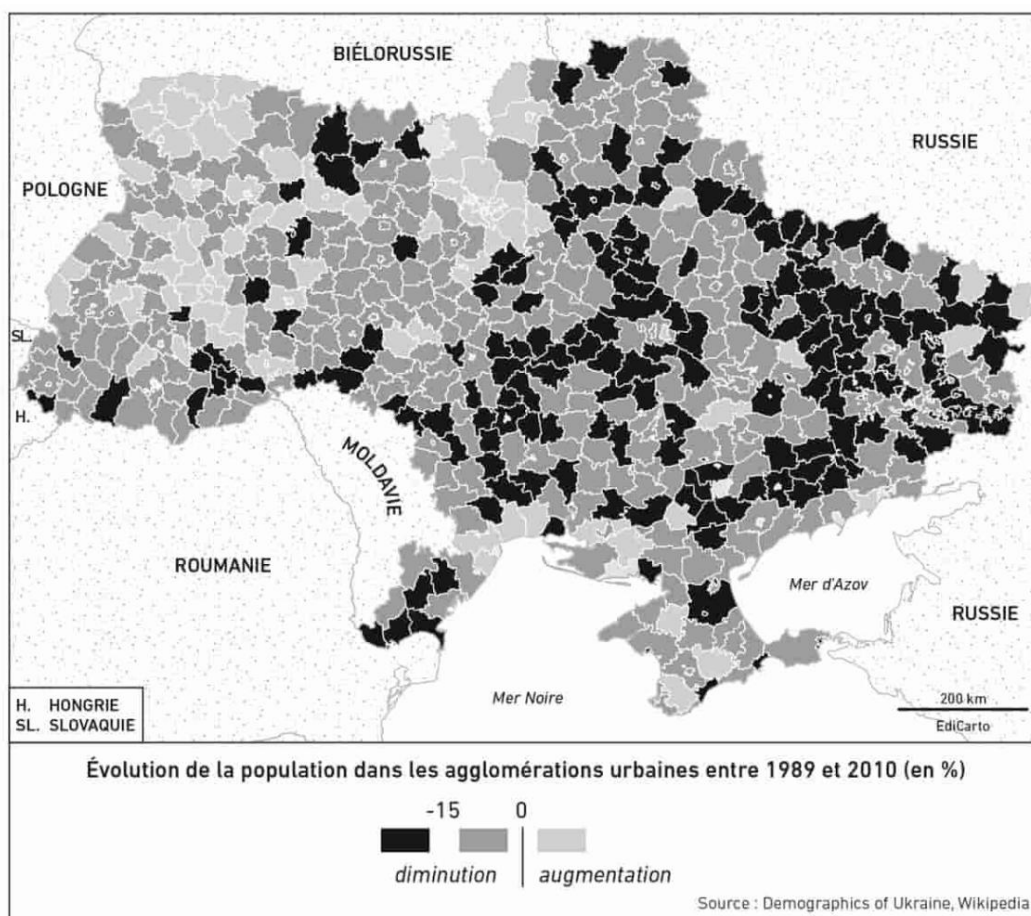
It is interesting to compare the map showing the evolution of the urban population to that of the population in general. They don't match. In the West we find a Ukraine more

**resistant. But the main center of depopulation is this time in central Ukraine, particularly in its northern part.**

**Chernobyl, located to the immediate north of kyiv, undoubtedly has something to do with it. The fact remains that the swelling of cities in the Russian-speaking part is entirely specific.**

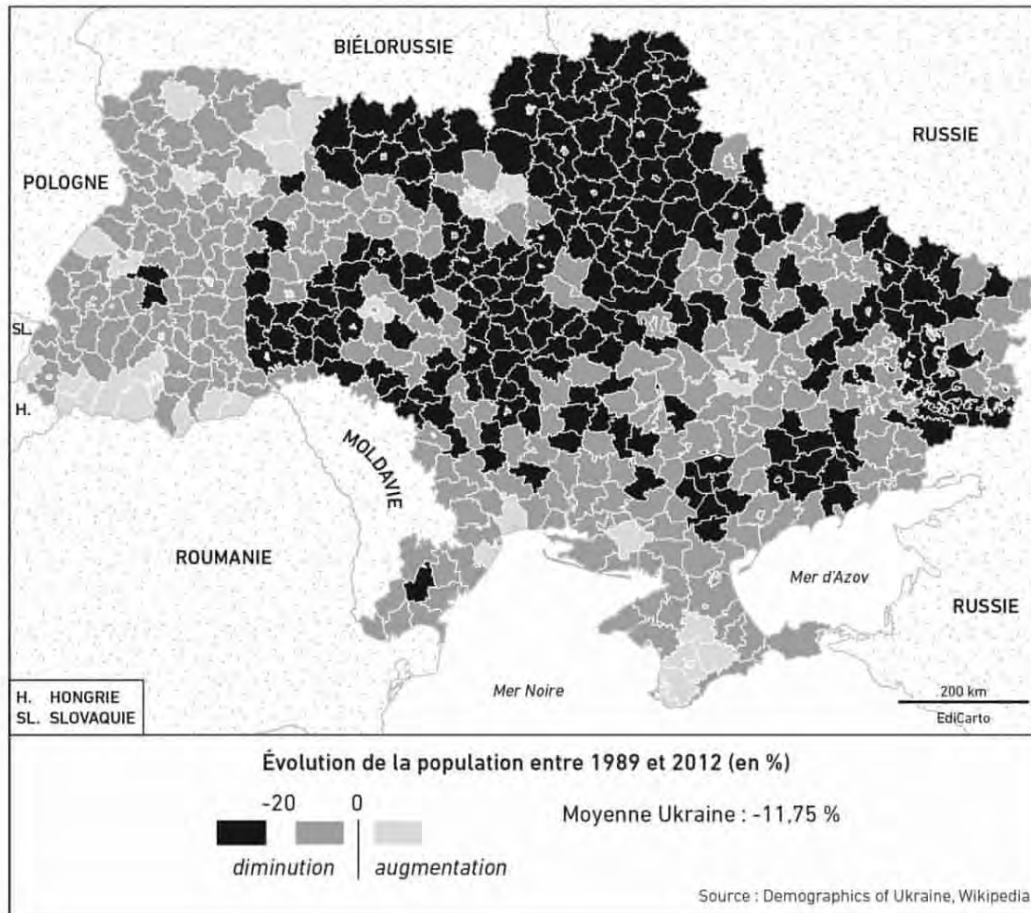
**Map 2.4**

**THE DECLINE OF URBAN POPULATIONS IN UKRAINE FROM 1989  
To 2012**



**Map 2.5**

**THE DECLINE OF THE GENERAL UKRAINIAN POPULATION OF  
1989 TO 2012**



We will find this fragility of the middle classes in the [next chapter in Eastern Europe](#), where it characterizes almost all the former popular democracies. Note, in the case of Ukraine, that the flight of the Russian-speaking middle classes was preceded by that of the Jews. These constituted, in fact, a significant fraction of the middle classes. Their educational level, higher than that of the population as a whole, derived from a religion which, like Protestantism (but a millennium and a half in advance), has always considered that education is essential.

In Ukraine, the Jews spoke Russian or Yiddish, not having

custom of preferring the language of the peasants. They were proportionally more numerous there than in Russia, even if the overall quantities, around 1970, were close: 817,000 in Russia, 777,000 in Ukraine (for a population which was a third of that of Russia). In 2010, there were only 158,000 Jews in Russia and 71,000 in Ukraine, which means that between 1970 and 2010 their number fell by 80% in Russia and by 90% in Ukraine, where around 1970 they represented 1.7% of the population

compared to only 0.6% in Russia <sup>9</sup>. The additional hemorrhage of members of the middle classes was therefore more significant in Ukraine.

## ***2014, the end of democratic hope***

The Maidan crisis in 2014 precipitated a rupture. The 2010 elections were considered fair. It was different with those which took place after Maidan and the ousting of Yanukovych.

In 2014, however, the most important card is not results. As in 2010, Poroshenko achieved his best scores in Western and Central Ukraine in 2014 and did not win a majority in Southern and Eastern Ukraine.

The decisive card is that of abstention rates. Participation declined in 2014 in Russian-speaking regions; These elections mark the moment when these regions disappeared from the Ukrainian political system. Without even looking at the details of the numerous bans on political parties, we can say, based on these abstention rates, that the 2014 elections marked the end of a Ukrainian democracy, which, in truth, had never worked.

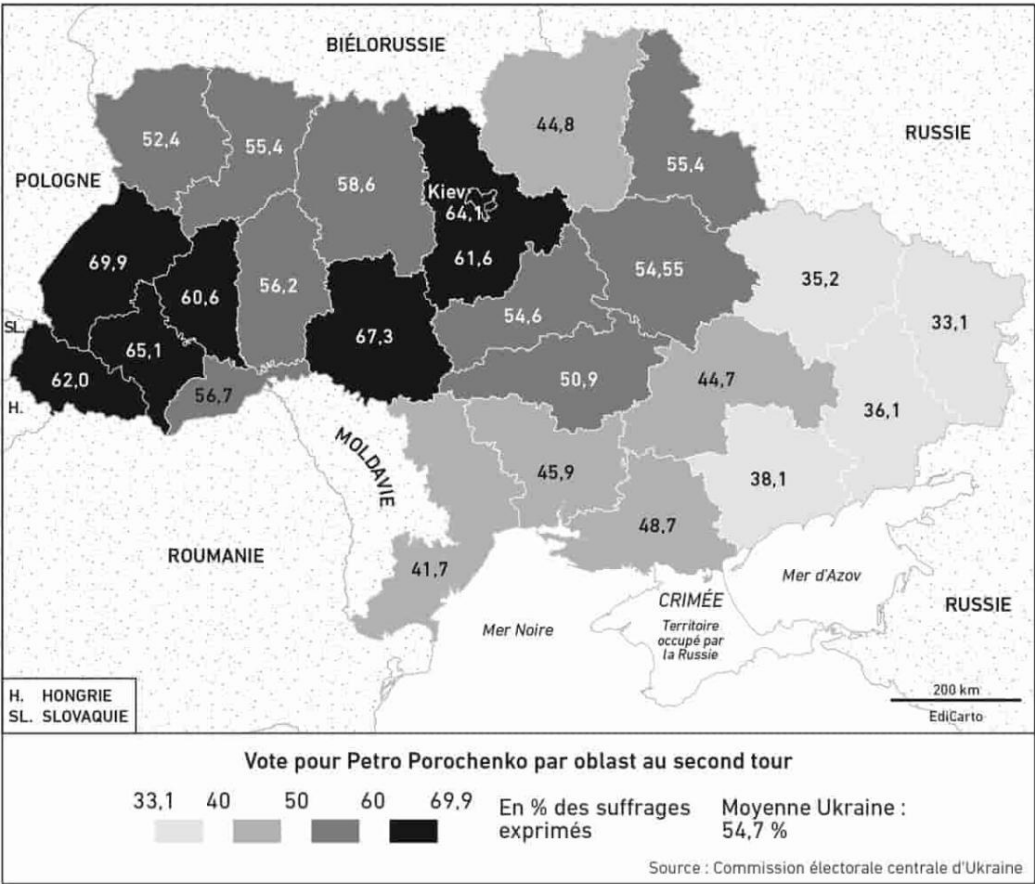
**We witnessed the birth of a restricted, dense Ukraine around its Ukrainian-speaking regions. It has two poles.**

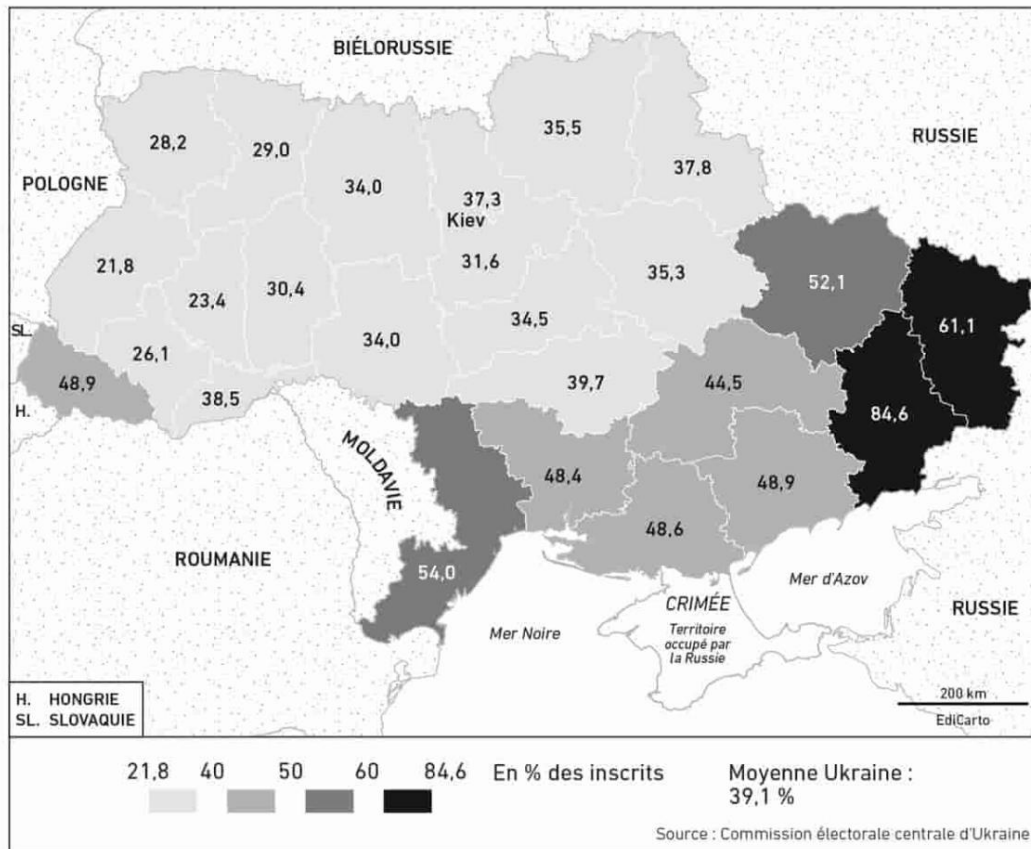
**Firstly, an extremely active nationalist center around Lviv, in Galicia, a region with no real cultural link with Russia and whose entire history, from the Austrian Empire to the pogrom of 1941, refers to that of the Germanic sphere – except for a brief occupation by Stalin's troops between the German-Soviet pact and the start of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941.**

**Then, a center dominated by Kiev, capital of 2.9 million inhabitants, whose population did not fall during the crisis and which plays a leading role in less urbanized central Ukraine, a bit like Paris in the heart of its basin, between 1789 and 1848.**



**Map 2.6**  
**THE 2014 UKRAINIAN ELECTIONS: VOTES FOR**  
**POROSHENKO**



**Map 2.7****THE ABSTENTION RATE IN 2014**

Let's summarize. Let us distinguish, initially, three Ukraines: a western Ukraine, quite rural, with a very clear nuclear family, still structured by Greek-Catholic religious traditions (the Uniates), traditional center of nationalism around Lviv, its main urban center. It can be described as *ultranationalist Ukraine*.

Next to it, a central Ukraine including kyiv, the capital, much more Western, with an Orthodox religion, a nuclear family with weak patrilineal kinship, certainly an individualistic temperament, but which has never succeeded in giving birth to a State. Rather than a place of state construction, kyiv is where central power is spread: it is there that the

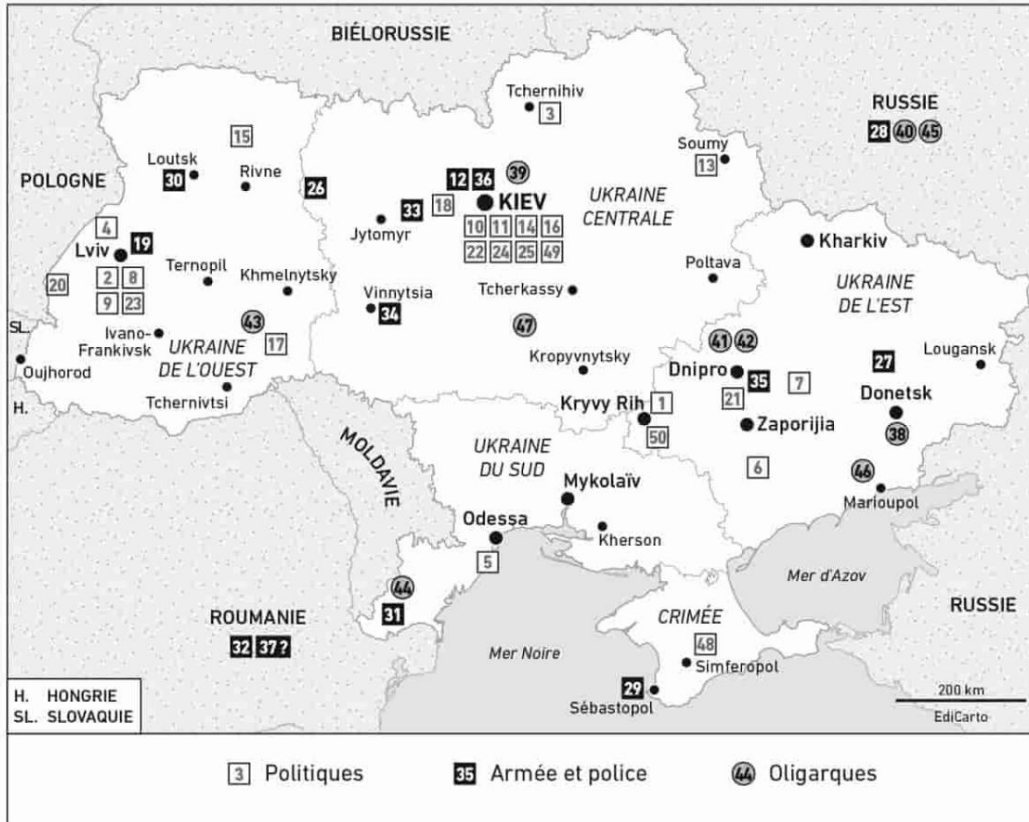
Orange Revolution then the Maidan revolt, and before the war the economic-political manipulations of the oligarchs took place. It can be described as *anarchic Ukraine*.

Finally, there is a region comprising the south and east of the country, which was Russophile but whose middle classes have deserted and which today, if it is not occupied by the Russian army, has not more form, despite its strong nuclear and patrilineal anthropological background. I would call it *an anomic Ukraine*, in the sense of social atomization that American sociology traditionally gives to this term.

It is obvious that from 2014 the West and the Center played together against the Russophile side. This can be clearly seen on the map indicating the geographical origin of the current Ukrainian elites. The members of the government, the highest officials of the army and the police, the ten richest oligarchs and some media personalities were selected. The table is nominative and the reader will be able to judge for themselves the relevance of the sample.

**Map 2.8**

**WHERE DID THE UKRAINIAN ELITES COME FROM ?**



**TABLE 1**

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**THE UKRAINIAN ELITES**

(P) Policies

(A) Army and police

(O) Oligarchs

1. Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelensky, President of Ukraine (P)
2. Denys Anatoliyovych Chmyhal, Prime Minister (P)
3. Yulia Anatoliyivna Svyrydenko, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Trade (P)
4. Iryna Andriivna Vereshchuk, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories (P)
5. Olha Vitaliivna Stefanichyna, Deputy Prime Minister for Integration European and Euro-Atlantic Ukraine (P).
6. Mykhaylo Albertovych Fedorov, Deputy Prime Minister for Innovation, Education, Science and Technological Development, Minister of Digital Development of Ukraine (P)
7. Oleksandr Mykolayovych Kubrakov, Deputy Prime Minister for the Restoration of Ukraine and Minister of Territorial Development (P)
8. Oleh Mykolayovych Nemchinov, Secretary General of the Government (P)
9. German Valeriyovych Galushchenko, Minister of Energy (P)
10. Vadym Markovych Gutzeit, Minister of Youth and Sports (P)
11. Oleksandr Mykolayovych Kamyshin, Minister of Strategic Industries (P)
12. Ihor Volodymyrovych Klymenko, Minister of the Interior (A)
13. Dmytro Ivanovych Kouleba, Minister of Foreign Affairs (P)
14. Yulia Anatoliyivna Laputina, Minister of Veterans (P)
15. Viktor Kyrlovych Liachko, Minister of Health (P)
16. Oksen Vassylivych Lissovyi, Minister of Education and Science (P)
17. Denys Leontiyovych Maliouska, Minister of Justice (P)
18. Serhiy Mykhaylovych Marchenko, Minister of Finance (P)
19. Oleksiy Yuriyovych Reznikov, Minister of Defense until September 6 2023 (A)
20. Mykola Tarasovych Solskiy, Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food (P)
21. Ruslan Oleksandrovych Strilets, Minister of the Environment (P)
22. Oleksandr Vladyslavovych Tkatchenko, Minister of Culture and Information (P)
23. Oksana Ivanivna Zholnovych, Minister of Social Affairs (P)
24. Andriy Borissovych Iermak, head of the presidential administration (P)
25. Vitaliy Volodymyrovych Klitchko, mayor of kyiv (P)
26. Valeriy Fedorovych Zalouzhniy, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (A)
27. Serhiy Oleksandrovych Chaptala, Chief of Staff (A)

28. Oleksandr Stanislavovych Syrskiy, Commander of Ground Forces (A)
29. Oleksiy Leonidovych Neijpapa, Commander of the Naval Forces (A)
30. Mykola Mykolayovych Oleshchuk, Air Force Commander (A)
31. Maksym Viktorovych Myrhorodsky, commander of the air assault forces  
(HAS)
32. Viktor Oleksandrovych Khorenko, Commander of Operations Forces  
special (A)
33. Vassyl Vassyllovych Maliouk, head of the Ukrainian secret service (SBU) (A)
34. Serhiy Anatoliyovych Andrushchenko, deputy of Maliouk (A)
35. Sandourskiy Valeriyovytch Anatoliy, another deputy of Maliouk (A)
36. Kyrylo Oleksiyovych Boudanov, Director of the General Intelligence Directorate  
of the Ministry of Defense (GUR MOU), i.e. the Military Intelligence Service (A)
  
37. Vadym Skibitsky, Deputy Director of Military Services (A)
38. Rinat Leonidovych Akhmetov (O)
39. Victor Mykhaylovych Pinchuk (O)
40. Kostyantyn Valentynovych Jevago (O)
41. Ihor Valeriovych Kolomoisky (O)
42. Hennadiy Boryssovych Bogolyubov (O)
43. Oleksandr Volodymyrovych Hereha (O)
44. Petro Oleksiovych Poroshenko (O)
45. Vadym Vladyslavovych Novinskiy (O)
46. Oleksandr Vladilenovych Yaroslavskiy (O)
47. Yuriy Anatoliyovych Kosiouk (O)
48. Sevgil Khairtdynivna Moussayeva, one of Ukraine's most famous journalists,  
ranked by Time among the hundred most influential people in the world in 2022 (P)
  
49. Oleksandra Vyatcheslavivna Matviytchouk, lawyer, activist, Nobel Prize winner  
peace 2022 (P)
50. Olena Volodymyrivna Zelenska, the first lady (P)

(Score date: July 2, 2023)

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**The West, ultranationalist Ukraine, is over-represented among political elites; the Center, anarchic Ukraine, is over-represented in the military-police elite. The East and the South, the anomic Ukraine, have only the oligarchs on their side, who, for the most part, have been marginalized or subdued since the start of the war.**

**The events favored the rise of a structure centralized which is not a State strictly speaking but a**

military-police organization financed by Washington, and the oligarchs therefore naturally disappeared as autonomous authorities, with the pluralism they defended. Their fall is also linked to the overall fall of Russophony. This description in no way excludes the existence of ideological forces and groups which compete for control of Western administration and subsidies but are, first and foremost, sincerely nationalist.

The over-representation of Central Ukrainians within the military and police apparatus may come as a surprise. It results paradoxically from the anarchic character of central Ukraine, derived from a nuclear family background in the absence of state traditions. The army and the police embody an inversion of the general temperament. Founded on the principle of hierarchy, they represent a principle of order and easily, naturally, dominate their environment if the desire takes them.

The army is particularly strong politically where society is disordered and it easily takes power there, as is a tradition in Latin America, a continent of nuclear families.

Paradoxically, authoritarian cultures, while they can produce great military traditions, do not constitute environments favorable to coups. Neither Hitler nor Stalin were ever actually threatened by their generals. Russian tradition, in particular, ensures absolute political submission of the army and this is also why Putin had little to fear from Prigogine's rebellion.

It was therefore the true birth of the Ukrainian nation that we witnessed in 2014, through the alliance of the ultranationalism of the West and the anarcho-militarism of the Center, against the Russophile part of the country, very weakened. by the flight of its elites. And it is this new, reduced, concentrated Ukrainian nation that effectively resisted the Russian attack. You only have to look at the geography of the invasion to be convinced: the Russian advance in the southern region, as far as Kherson, was easy, while, towards Kyiv,

she encountered very strong resistance. These different levels of resistance reflect the specific relationship that each of the two regions maintains with Russia.

### ***Towards anti-Russian nihilism***

The Russians were not able to imagine that the dynamism of their own society would empty Ukraine of part of its elites, and even less that this Ukraine would be able to resist militarily, mobilized by a feeling anti-Russian approach of a new depth.

This is a lesson for us. The war revealed sociological and historical processes that had never been seen before, or that had never occurred to anyone to examine in the past. In a Ukrainian society in need of balance, resentment against Russia ultimately became a guide, a horizon, and one would even be tempted to write: an element of social structuring.

Russia continues, in fact, to inhabit the Ukrainian psyche and regulate it, but in a negative way. If economic reconstruction was not possible, war (financed by the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union) could become a reason for living. A way too.

In a text from July 2022, Putin discusses at length the historical association between Russia and Ukraine. If we think in the long past, he is right. New Russia was indeed conquered by the Russians and Odessa founded on the initiative of Catherine II in 1794. But what Putin did not envisage was that the disintegration of the USSR and the communist economy had produced a negative xation on Russia in Ukraine. Yes, the Russians remained at the heart of the Ukrainian mental system – but in a negative way.



Russians constantly talk about Ukrainian neo-Nazis. The “Western democracies” (through the silence of their leaders, their journalists, their academics) seem to consider that the fact of displaying insignia derived from those of the SS is either compatible with their ideal, or benign, without measuring, probably, the resignation that this silence betrays. Our casual attitude to us Westerners is unacceptable and says something terrible about our moral state and our relationship to the Shoah, even as we gargle with memorial celebrations.

But this chapter is about Ukraine, not us, and I don't think that the “neo-Nazi question” is the right formula, or at least a boring formula to describe the Ukrainian situation from the inside.

Reactivating the memory of their Great Patriotic War, the Russians claim to de-Nazi the country. But what Nazism?

Something like "neo-Nazism" certainly exists in the western part of Ukraine, where, during World War II, Stepan Bandera's nationalist organization, in coordination with the Wehrmacht and the SS, massacred many Jews. Bandera is revered in Ukraine today. Since one of the two poles of current Ukrainian political power is located there, Banderism, an ideology tinged with anti-Semitism, must be taken seriously.

However, in the central Russian-speaking or Ukrainian-speaking area, we are only dealing, in my opinion, with pseudo-neo-Nazism, carried by historically illiterate people who use the symbols of the monster without really being serious anti-Semites. However, Nazism without anti-Semitism does not exist. What characterizes the bulk of Ukraine today, far from Galicia, is not anti-Semitism but Russophobia, a conceptual opposition between two hatreds which is also a rapprochement, since they target mythologized groups.

Russophobia sometimes exists in the Russian-speaking part, where it reveals real self-hatred. The founding core of the Azov brigade, a paramilitary battalion particularly targeted by the

Russian accusations of neo-Nazism (and indeed very violent), was made up of Russian speakers.

More than the neo-Nazism of Western Ukraine, it is the Russophobia widespread throughout Ukraine *before* the invasion which is the new phenomenon and which must be understood.

Not everything in the anti-Russian nationalist aspiration comes from the past. There have of course been events like the Holodomor in the past that could inspire anti-Russian feelings. But the Russian speakers from Donbass who took the side of Ukraine and who used Nazi symbols (there are probably very few of them) were of Russian culture. I would gladly see in their case a minority reaction in these lower classes that the Russian middle classes have abandoned. All this, I admit, remains very speculative. But we must try to explain why a new Russophobia developed in the Ukrainian-speaking majority before the war.

I can propose a more general hypothesis. The suicidal unrealism of Kyiv's strategy suggests that, paradoxically, of a pathological Ukrainian attachment to Russia: a need for conflict which reveals an inability to separate. I recall, to evaluate the interpretation that follows, that, contrary to what the Western media repeat, Donbass and Crimea are not simply Russian-speaking, but Russian.

What Moscow asked for were three things. First, of course, keep Crimea which is strategically vital for the security and even the existence of its fleet in the Black Sea; secondly, that the Russian populations of Donbass have an acceptable situation; finally, that Ukraine has a neutral status. However, a Ukrainian nation sure of its existence and its destiny *in Western Europe* would have accepted these conditions; it would have even gotten rid of Donbass. After the implosion of the Soviet sphere, Czechs and Slovaks, who no longer wanted to live together, separated amicably, with the dominant Czechs renouncing their

domination. Taking note of the fact that Russians and Ukrainians no longer got along, Ukraine could have let the specifically Russian regions break away from it and concentrate on building a truly Ukrainian nation-state, recognized by all and supported by some. But after 2014, it continued the war to reconquer Donbass and its Russian population and never stopped claiming Crimea and its Russian population; she wanted to maintain her sovereignty over populations of another nation, and a nation much more powerful than herself. If we place ourselves in the conscious and rational universe of international relations, the project, I repeat, was suicidal and reality today shows that Ukraine is committing suicide as a state. But if we look for the deep determinations of the Ukrainian desire to maintain Russian provinces under the sovereignty of Kyiv, we can sense the action of unconscious forces which refused separation from Russia and intended to remain linked to it.

Reconquering Donbass and Crimea was, in a certain way, continuing to be Russian in the general sense of the term, including Great and Little Russians. Beyond the incessant proclamations of Europeanness and Westernness of Kyiv, finding oneself at war with Russia, forever, was forever remaining in the space of the former Empire of the Tsars even though it would have been so easy to get out of!

I deliberately posed the action of an unconscious "Russian" of the Ukrainian elites before examining in more detail the extreme violence of their conscious actions to get rid of the Russian imprint, which therefore took the form of a suicide in stages.

Firstly, economic suicide, which constituted a sort of inaugural act, in full conformity, for once, with the economic ideology of the European Union. It is the question of economic association, either with Russia or with the European Union, which provoked Maidan. Because industries located mainly in the East interacted with Russian industry, Yanukovich could not choose the EU without causing destruction

not only of Eastern Ukraine on the industrial level, but of Ukraine in general.

Choose economic association with the European Union, to kyiv was, I insist, condemning Ukrainian industry, so linked to Russia, to decline and returning Ukraine to its specialization

19th century agricultural<sup>e</sup> century. The decision has been made, the goal achieved – but against the long-term interests of a possible nation-state Ukrainian.

The central government's relentlessness against the Russian language is (similarly) not only directed against Russian speakers. In Ukraine, the Russian language was that of high culture. Its eradication therefore not only affects Russian-speaking Ukraine; It's a symptom of self-hatred. The government of President Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelensky, himself originally Russian-speaking, continues to aggravate the culture war. According to David Teurtrie, "in recent years, he has promulgated laws aimed at removing Russian from the entire social sphere. Since 2022 and the start of the war, it has been forbidden to study Russian writers at school, academics who use Russian in class can be fired for this reason, there are fines for officials who post messages in Russian on social networks. And Zelensky has just introduced a law in Parliament that requires Ukrainian civil servants to master... English." This self-negation moves us towards the notion of nihilism.

We know Clausewitz's formula: "War is only the simple continuation of politics by other means. » It hardly applies to the analysis of the Ukrainian case. Wanting to place or maintain Russian populations in Donbass and Crimea under Ukrainian sovereignty against an immensely more powerful Russia cannot be considered a political project carried out by other means. The war is here its own goal, it gives meaning to a nation where politics does not exist: it is the incapacity of the Ukrainian nation-state to be born and to find its basis which maintains a war without end. "Neo-Nazism" is not the right one

concept to qualify the inability of the Ukrainian nation-state to exist; to seize the insatiable need that Kyiv has to set itself up as a vigilante against Moscow; to understand the self-destruction of Ukrainian industry; to describe the regression of concrete Ukrainian culture and life, so dependent on the Russian language.

At the heart of the general policy of the Ukrainian government, we sense a sense of vertigo, a flight towards the precipice, a destructive impulse of what is without considering what could be. The concept that comes to mind is that of nihilism.

## ***An unidentified political object***

One of the problems that war poses for analysts is that, beyond the horror, it inevitably produces the illusion of simplicity. Two incompetent generals who confront each other will always manage to fight a battle which, most often, despite all their errors of judgment regarding their troops and those of the adversary, will end with one victor and one vanquished. Even a draw will look serious if it resulted in enough deaths. Two camps face each other. Everything becomes simple. Everything becomes simplistic.

Ukraine is taking on Russia, feverish journalists tell us this is a high-intensity war between two fully engaged nations. This is false, doubly so.

This is false for Russia. Putin has sent, let us point out again, only 120,000 men to Ukraine and, despite the mobilization of 300,000 reservists, is trying to continue what he calls a “special military operation” while remaining at the level of a colonial-style war – in order not to compromise the social balance that Russia had regained under his reign. It is for this reason that he overused Wagner, with the problems that we know, and also resorted to the Chechens.

But it is also wrong about Ukraine. The Western narrative presents a nation in arms, unanimous and totally mobilized against the aggressor. Let's measure. In the summer of 2022, after the great mobilization which made it possible to outflank the Russians in the oblasts of Kharkiv and Kherson, the official Ukrainian workforce was 700,000 men. But in August 1914, with the same enlistable population of 12 million men aged 15 to 60, France had raised 2 million. The Ukrainian mobilization did not reach half of the French mobilization.

Our differentiated study of Ukrainian territory reveals what could explain it. The Russophile half of Ukraine probably did not carry out a mass uprising. Not represented at the level where political, military and security decisions are made, abstentionist in the 2014 elections, it is not impossible that it is also, reasonably, on the military level.

But what this analysis especially undoes is the image of a Ukrainian nation-state. To close this chapter, we must therefore try to deny what kind of object, or subject, or historical actor, Ukraine is at war.

Let's say what it is not. With between twelve and nineteen political parties banned (I can't find a stable number anywhere), it is not a liberal democracy. With a budget that no longer depends on taxes but on Western subsidies, his State is in levitation.

Let's listen to the Americans from the time they revolted against the British Crown. Their famous slogan “ *No Taxation without Representation* ”, launched by their pamphleteers, expressed their refusal to be taxed by a Parliament where they were not represented. Consent to taxation is constitutive of liberal democracy, just like the rule of the majority and the protection of minorities. The tax can be classified in the Weberian rubric of the monopoly of legitimate violence: it presupposes the right that the State has to extract wealth from its nationals, as opposed to a contribution

voluntary. The State does not collect: it taxes. And the resources thus obtained allow it to finance the repressive apparatus which, itself, ensures the collection of taxes. The circle is complete. But that the amount and distribution of the tax must be agreed by political representation means that the monopoly of violence is also legitimate because it is exercised democratically.

None of this applies to Ukraine at war. There is no longer any political representation of all citizens, if not at most, perhaps, of the inhabitants of its central and western parts, but even that is not certain. And, in any case, the resources of its military and repressive apparatus now come from outside, from various Western powers, mainly denominated in dollars and euros.

Ukraine is therefore not a liberal democracy and the ideological-journalistic theme of Western liberal democracies flying to the aid of a nascent Ukrainian liberal democracy is obviously absurd. If there is a link between them, it is based on an identity of a different nature. As will be shown in the chapters

devoted to Europe and the Americanosphere<sup>10</sup> the West is no longer a world of liberal democracies. It is too early to say now what it is but we will see that the coincidences of values between Ukraine and the West, although said values are neither democratic nor liberal, are numerous and deep.

These allies “found” each other, and the integration of the Ukrainian state at war into the West’s tax-free financing system is not just a coincidence.

<sup>1</sup>. See Emma Lambertin, “Lessons from Ukraine: Shifting International Surrogacy Policy to Protect Women and Children,” *Journal of Public and International Affairs*,

<sup>er</sup>  
1 May 2020.

<sup>2</sup>. A. Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

**3.** See Emmanuel Todd, *Where are they? A sketch of women's history*, Seuil, 2022, chapter 14.

**4.** Oliver H. Radkey. *The Election to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly. 1917* [1950], Cornell University Press, new edition 1977.

**5.** The loss figures caused by the Holodomor are highly contested. I base my estimate of 2.6 million deaths on the article "A New Estimate of Ukrainian Population Losses During the Crises of the 1930s and 1940s" published in *Population Studies*, 56, 2002 (p. 249- 264). It is signed by Jacques Vallin, France Meslé, Serguei Adamets and Serhii Pyrozhkov, researchers whose competence is, in my opinion, above all suspicion.

**6.** See Alexandra V. Lysova, Nikolay G. Shchitov, and William Alex Pridemore, "Homicide in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus," in *Handbook of European Homicide Research. Patterns, Explanations and Country Studies*, New York, Springer, 2011, p. 451-470.

**7.** Anders Åslund, *Ukraine. What Went Wrong and How to Fix It*, Washington, Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015, p. 8-9.

**8.** I thank him for giving me this information and this key.

**9.** Mark Tolts, "A Half Century of Jewish Emigration from the Former Soviet Union: Demographic Aspects," Project on Russian and Eurasian Jewry, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University, November 20, 2019.

**10.** To designate the whole made up of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, I will speak of "Americanosphere" where I spoke in my previous books and where most authors speak of "Anglosphere". The idea of a strengthened community between these five countries is cultural and geopolitical evidence and the concept of Anglosphere, as presented by James C. Benett (*The Anglosphere Challenge. Why the English-Speaking Nations Will Lead the Way in the Twenty-First Century*, Lanham, Rowman and Littleeld, 2004), is essential. It is not so much the absorption of the four other countries by the United States that makes me prefer the term Americanosphere as the disappearance, as we will see, of the "Anglo" cultural direction of the United States themselves. -themselves.



### CHAPTER 3

## ***In Eastern Europe, a postmodern Russophobia***

The two previous chapters each began with a surprise. Surprises caused by the resistance of the Russian economy to reflect on Russia; then by the military resistance of Ukraine to reflect on this country. This chapter, devoted to Eastern Europe, that is to say the old popular democracies, to which I add the Baltic republics, will begin with an absence of surprise. Nothing in the relationships between Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Russia has confused anyone, even though there really should have been. Everything happened as if, since the end of communism and, even more so, since the start of this war, the Russophobia of Eastern Europe and its belonging to the Western camp could not have been more natural, were part of a story familiar from the depths of time and which needed no explanation. However, none of this was self-evident.

### ***Serial perplexities***

**Let us remember that on the eve of the Second World War all these countries were governed, if not by dictatorships, at least by authoritarian regimes in a region ravaged by anti-Semitism. An exception: Czechoslovakia, which was a liberal democracy, cousin of France, more developed than it in industrial and educational terms. Post-war Sovietization therefore did not take place in a world which would have, at the outset, been democratic and liberal. And, when Eastern Europe began to join NATO and then the European Union from 1999, it did not join a trajectory unfortunately deviated by Stalin. His conversion to liberalism should have been surprising. Another subject of astonishment: the two regions or countries of Eastern Europe that cannot be described as simply Russophobic are East Germany and Hungary. In East Germany, a certain nostalgia for communism is still palpable among a minority of people and support for Ukraine even weaker than elsewhere in the Federal Republic. As for Hungary, under the leadership of Viktor Orban, it is, so to speak, officially hostile to the pro-Ukrainian position of the European Union and intends to continue to collaborate with Russia.**

**However, these are precisely the two countries which, more than the others, fought against Russia at the time of Soviet domination: in 1953 in East Germany through massive strikes; in 1956 in Hungary by a revolution that the Red Army drowned in blood. More recently, and decisively, East Germany (then GDR) brought down the Iron Curtain with the collaboration of Hungary, always they: from the moment when the East Germans were able to flee across the Hungary, which had opened its border with Austria, put an end to Russian domination in the sphere. It is puzzling that these two regions or countries are the least hostile to Russia today.**

**In some of the Eastern countries there is a Russophobia that is at first sight understandable. In Poland, first, a nation whose tradition was to be dismembered, at regular intervals, by its neighbors**

Prussian, Austrian and especially Russian. Let us add, in his case, the massacre of Katyn – 4,400 Polish soldiers savagely murdered by Stalin's Russia in 1940. These events of recent history should not, however, make us forget that communism mainly killed Russians, and that this it was the Russians themselves who brought it down.

Concerning the Baltic republics, in particular the northernmost ones, Estonia and Latvia, we can also understand that a certain concern persists there. At the time of the breakup of the USSR, they included significant Russian minorities, concentrated in cities and industrial zones, where they remain: 25% of the total population in Estonia and Latvia, 5% in Lithuania. For them, joining NATO, with the prospect of a rebirth of a Russian power, seemed logical and necessary.

Moreover, if, as I believe, the current war results in a defeat of the West and a de facto disintegration of NATO, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia can actually expect to be three of the main losers in the new geopolitical configuration of Europe.

Despite everything, it is still disconcerting that Latvia presents itself or is considered a sort of democratic virgin (and therefore Russophobic). It is true that an intrinsic nationalism allowed the Baltic republics to escape Russian domination after the First World War. But Estonia and Latvia (the latter roughly corresponded to Tsarist Livonia, which also included a piece of present-day Estonia) were noted for their support for Bolshevism, much above average. Russian. In the elections to the Constituent Assembly of 1917, the average score of the Bolsheviks

in the whole of the former Tsarist Empire was 24% of the votes. In <sup>1</sup>. Estonia they got 40%, in Livonia 72%! Let us also remember the Latvian Guard, pampered by Lenin, and which played such an important role during the Russian Revolution as a force maintaining order. A 1918 survey of early members of the

**Cheka, the Bolshevik political police, ancestor of the KGB then the FSB, reveals the animosity of the Latvians with communism. Out of a sample of 894 individuals (the upper echelons of the hierarchy), only 361 were Russian, but 124 Latvians, 18**

**Lithuanians, 12 Estonians, 21 Ukrainians, 102 Poles, 116 Jews <sup>2</sup>. There**  
**over-representation of minorities in a revolutionary institution is in itself normal, but the proportion of 13.8% of Latvians while they represented at most only 2% of the population within the Russian Empire is still a very good performance. From an anthropological point of view, no surprise: the traditional family structure in the Baltic countries, particularly Estonia and Latvia, was communitarian of the Russian type, spontaneously producing authoritarianism and egalitarianism, therefore communism. This Baltic anthropological fund was integrated into NATO and the European Union in 2004.**

**Let's return to the old popular democracies, apart from Hungary. The contrast is striking between, on the one hand, their resentment against Russia and the way in which they forgave Germany, although it had brought sword and fire throughout the region during the Second World War. world and that the Wehrmacht behaved more cruelly than the Red Army.**

**The enthusiasm with which the Czechs sold Skoda to Volkswagen and not to Renault was surprising. Given the importance of the automobile industry, it was choosing to enter this Germanic sphere from which Bohemia had had such difficulty extracting itself. In fact, the fact that countries that were often martyrs to Nazism decided to do so poses a real question to the historian. In moments of despondency and bad spirits, I sometimes wonder if in certain Eastern countries we do not feel, more or less consciously, gratitude towards Germany because it has freed from their "Jewish problem".**

Last oddity: the mutual love that Poland and Ukraine temporarily devoted to each other at the start of the war. Poland, however, has long dominated a more or less vast part of western Ukraine; the Poles were nobles there and the Ukrainians were not only peasants but serfs. The Banderist Ukrainian nationalists had, as we have seen, certainly killed many Jews, but also many Poles. The state of mind “Let’s kiss, Folleville!” » which reigned until September 2023 in relations between Poland and Ukraine will only seem natural to those who are devoid of any conscience

<sup>3</sup>  
historical .

To appreciate the strangeness of the situation and understand the meaning of current Russophobia, we must reflect on the deep history of these regions and examine their general social dynamics.

## ***Our first third world***

The first absurdity that the long-term historian encounters is the idea that Eastern Europe would naturally be "part" of Western Europe, that it would be a piece of the same world, for some time fractured by Soviet imperialism. It is exactly the opposite: here we are in the presence of trajectories which have always been distinct, complementary but opposed.

The economic (and general historical) takeoff of Europe from the West took place from the central Middle Ages, in the 12<sup>th</sup> and XIII<sup>th</sup> centuries, a process which accelerated from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. He acted in the evolution of Eastern Europe, but to make it a dependent and dominated area. Less developed, it exported

simple products, in this case grains and wood, which it exchanged for manufactured goods from Western Europe. It followed and made up part of its delay and nothing a priori would have prevented it from joining the developed Western sphere, like Scandinavia. But the Black Death of 1348 and its after-effects, on the contrary, accentuated the gap between the two Europes. In the West, the demographic boom put the peasantry in a position of strength and led to the liquidation of serfdom. In the East, under-urbanized, and therefore less affected by the pandemic, the influence of land lords was strengthened and what Engels called "second serfdom" emerged.

Max Weber insisted on the role of cities in the social development of the West, including the countryside, with the appearance in north of the Alps of the adage "The air of the city <sup>4</sup>". He noted makes it clear that the structural demographic deficit of the cities implied a continuous flow of immigrants, mainly rural people. In the city, serfdom was de facto abolished, but a new economic differentiation superimposed simple workers, skilled craftsmen, administrators and, at the top of the hierarchy, urban patriciate. This found itself in competition with the rural aristocracy in its relationship to the monarchical State, and we can therefore conceive that urban development exerted negative pressure on the institution of serfdom in the countryside itself.

At the same time, the urban underdevelopment of Eastern Europe made the landed aristocracy all-powerful, without rival, and capable of keeping a previously free peasantry on the ground. This "second serfdom", designed to ensure the production and export of grain to developed Europe, appeared at the very time when the first was disappearing in the West. Result: in the West, a free labor force, exploited on a market; in the East, a labor force attached to the land, and corvée rather than paid work, with direct political domination of the owner of the land over the worker. Note that freedom and servitude are generally the two poles of a global historical evolution.

Ancient slavery and the slave trade in the 18th century<sup>e</sup> century have combined economic freedom and bodily servitude by making man a commodity.

What history shows is therefore not the common belonging of Eastern and Western Europe to the same process of emancipation, but a complementarity in the antagonistic development of freedom in the West and serfdom in the East with, as a distant consequence, liberal democracy in the West and dictatorship in the East.

Basically, Eastern Europe was our first Third World. We did not have time to formalize this evidence because this expression from Alfred Sauvy arrived too late, in 1952, when the area was Sovietized. But it was the first of the peripheries subordinated to a rapidly rising Western Europe.

## ***Middle classes, act I: from weakness to destruction***

The peasant nations of the East experienced state structures. There was a kingdom of Poland, for example, and it was associated with Lithuania, first from 1385 and the union of Krewo, then from 1569 to 1795, in what was called the Republic of Two Nations. But, due to the weakness of the urban network and the middle classes, these were fragile states, dominated by an anarchic aristocracy, and therefore easy prey for better organized neighbors. The self-destruction of Poland by the *liberum veto* – that is to say the possibility for a single member of the Diet, then an aristocratic assembly whose decrees had to be taken unanimously, to suspend a decision – is emblematic of this general social mechanism. Resulted

the partitions of Poland between Prussia, Austria and Russia in 1772, 1793 and 1795.

Paradoxically, incorporation into the Austrian and Russian Empires was a factor of industrial catch-up for these peripheral regions of Western Europe. Bohemia (present-day Czech Republic) carved out a place for itself in the Habsburg Empire which allowed it to develop. Hungary's first industrial boom resulted from the protection of its economy by the same Empire against Western Europe. The takeoff of Polish industry occurred in the last years of tsarism. Integrated into the West, Poland was reduced to playing a minor role there due to its agricultural specialization. Within the Russian Empire, it constituted, with the Baltic countries, thanks to the spread of literacy and new techniques, the most advanced part of the Empire, and it benefited from the protectionism it advocated.

On the economic level, the end of the tsarist era was therefore rather a good one for her.

At the time when the Russian, Prussian and Austro-Hungarian Empires fell apart, at the end of the First World War, the fundamental social trait of this Eastern Europe where "nationalities" were born (sometimes reborn) remained the underdevelopment of classes. averages. This explains the failure, between the two wars, of liberal democracy. Czechoslovakia is here the exception which confirms the rule since, if it succeeded in establishing a democracy, it was because it was the most advanced society and, having escaped the degenerative process initiated by the second serfdom, it had formed middle classes.

The great book on the period is *Decades of Crisis. Central and Eastern Europe before World War II*, by Iván T. Berend, a Jew from Budapest who, after an academic career in Hungary, emigrated in the United States – a sort of Hungarian Shlapentokh<sup>5</sup>. As he shows very well, the weakness of the middle classes was linked not only to the circumstances that we have described – submission to the West, serfdom, the weakness of the cities but —,



also to a general educational and cultural backwardness (although less great than that of Russia). Classic symptom of educational underdevelopment: the over-representation of Jews within small middle classes. The particular interest that their religion has in education gives Jews an economic and social advantage when the rest of the population is poorly educated. Some figures will be able to give an idea of their weight in the urban population of Eastern Europe, and therefore in the middle classes educated before the Shoah. Around 1930, they constituted 9.5% of the total population of Poland and 30% of that of Warsaw; 5% of the Hungarian population and 35% of that of Budapest; in Czechoslovakia, more advanced, they still represented 2.5% of the population, and 4% of that of Prague; in Austria, 2% of the population, but 8 or 9% of that of Vienna. The share of Jews was also significant in Latvia (4.9%) and Lithuania (7.6%), much smaller in Estonia (only 0.4%), or even in the European part of the USSR (3.5%). Germany, the hotbed of extermination anti-Semitism, actually had a very low proportion of Jews: 0.75%.

It is easy to imagine the effect that the Shoah had on these sparse middle classes where Jews were over-represented. Already fragile, perhaps they were destroyed because several of these countries also lost their elites of German origin. While the German colonizing peasants of the Middle Ages had more or less merged into Eastern European societies, an aristocracy and bourgeois heirs of the secularized Teutonic order had maintained themselves, in the Baltic cities for example, particularly in Estonia. and in Lithuania. However, during the German-Soviet pact of 1939, Hitler, through an agreement with Stalin, recovered these Germans from the Baltic countries. He only took, of course, pure Germans; the *Mischlinge* (or mixed-breeds) were sent back to Soviet Russia where they died in abominable conditions. Let us summarize: the Second World War had, at the very least, further weakened the already weak middle classes. It was inconceivable

that from 1945 democracy arose spontaneously in these countries, even in the absence of Soviet occupation.

## ***Middle classes, act II: resurrection under Soviet supervision***

In the aftermath of the Second World War, when the USSR built its protective shield and created popular democracies, it abolished a democracy which, except in Czechoslovakia, had never existed. Perhaps this is why it is only the Prague coup of 1948 that we remember. The bringing into line of countries like Hungary, Poland or Bulgaria made less noise, not to mention East Germany where communism directly succeeded Nazism.

Communism proved more politically violent than some of the interwar dictatorships. The centralized economy failed in popular democracies as in the USSR. But, paradoxically, Central and Eastern Europe, devastated by Nazism, deprived of part of its tiny middle classes, became, once occupied by the Red Army, the most culturally advanced part of the Soviet sphere.

Certain popular democracies developed honorable technical specialties: the industries of East Germany, Bohemia or Hungary. A detailed study would highlight what Hungarian economists called between 1965 and 1975 “quasi-development”, that is to say real industrial development although deficient in quality according to international standards.

Above all, the placing under Soviet supervision triggered an educational takeoff throughout Eastern Europe. Communist ideology has in common with Protestantism the obsession with education. The Barro-Lee database makes it possible to measure

progress made; it provides the proportion, in 1990, when the Wall fell, of people who had received secondary education and those who had received higher education, on the one hand among 70-74 year olds (who were between 25 and 30 years old in 1945 and had therefore been educated before communism) and on the other hand among 35-39 year olds (who were between 25 and 30 years old in 1980 and had been educated under communism). Let's start with Poland. Among 70-74 year olds, in 1990, 15.9% had received secondary education, 60.6% among 35-39 year olds. As for those with higher education, the proportions were 2.8% and 10.6% respectively. This last percentage is not considerable in absolute terms, but still reveals an impressive progression under communist supervision: a five-fold increase.

In the case of Hungary, in 1990, 6% of 70-74 year olds had received secondary education and 50.8% of 35-39 year olds. 4.6% and 13.5% had completed higher education. Finally, in the Czech Republic (which I am already separating from Slovakia) which, as we have seen, was more advanced at the start, there were, in 1990, 19.6% of secondary educated people aged 70-74 and 57.1% among 35-39 year olds, 4.1% higher educated among 70-74 year olds and 18.1% among 35-39 year olds. These figures are higher than those of other countries but the progression is less spectacular. Bohemia, for its part, was therefore deviated from its western trajectory between the two wars.

Educational development under Soviet domination created new middle classes.

### ***Eastern European inauthenticity***

Their rise will shed light on Eastern Europe's persistent Russophobia. And, once again, I don't forget Katyn and

other horrors perpetrated by the Soviets. But I also do not forget that the said middle classes, which today form, in the East, the support of "Western-style" democracy and have led the accession of their respective countries to NATO must their existence to the communist meritocratic system, to the takeover of their societies by the Russians for fifty-five years. Hatred of Russia seems to me to demonstrate a certain inauthenticity. Whether we detect guilt, imposter syndrome, I don't know.

I am opening here a line of research, even if, in the very immediate present, we must take seriously this Russophobia, that of Poland in particular, which distant history does not explain. If Poland went to war against Russia to support Ukraine, it would be the middle classes shaped by Russia who would lead it. This vision of a Polish democracy generated, ultimately, by the social transformation of the Soviet era, and of Ukrainian-speaking middle classes also born during the Soviet era, allows us to understand why Poland and Ukraine were able to forget their differences for a moment. historical, to forgive ourselves, through amnesia, the not so distant era when the Ukrainians of the West and Center were the serfs of Polish lords.

The inauthenticity that I attribute to the middle classes of the East can be nourished by another, complementary oddity: the reintegration of popular democracies into the Western world has made them regain their status as a dominated periphery, specialized in economic activities. the most ungrateful. In the Middle Ages, it was agricultural production; in the age of globalization, it is industrial production, essentially serving Germany. At the very moment when the working classes of Western Europe were being wiped out by free trade, a proletariat was developing in the old popular democracies such as Stalinism would not have dreamed of.

To take stock of this industrial specialization, let's start by looking at the proportion of the active population working in the secondary sector in Western Europe.

Let us first consider the most obviously Western countries. In the <sup>6</sup> . United Kingdom and Sweden, the share of the secondary sector in the active population is 18%, in France 19%. In Germany and Italy, two countries which have better resisted deindustrialization and maintain respect for manual work, the secondary sector is more important: 27% in Italy, 28% in Germany. But when we reach Eastern Europe, what is the ceiling in the West becomes the floor. In Slovenia, industry employs 30% of the active population, just like in Romania; in North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary, 31%; in Czechia and Slovakia, it rises to 37%.

What does this industrial specialization mean, deep down? Quite simply, there is something false and, again, inauthentic about identifying Eastern Europe with Western Europe.

The integration into the European Union of these certainly democratized countries, but with their middle classes from communist meritocracy and their proletariats from globalization, was not the addition to West European nation-states of states-nations resembling them. On the contrary, we have introduced into the Western European area societies whose history has been different and has remained so, this difference even becoming more accentuated in certain areas. The explosion of Russophobia, concomitant with the desire to integrate the EU and NATO, far from expressing a true proximity to the West, amounts to denying historical and social reality.

This Russophobia flourished even as Russia withdrew without a fight and even with a certain elegance. It persists even though Russian leaders, only too happy to be rid of satellites which, between 1945 and 1990, proved to be bullets, had no intention of sending their tanks back there.

Dominique de Villepin told me one day that in 2003 or 2004, I don't remember anymore, at the time when Putin, Schröder and Chirac were together opposing the Iraq war, Putin had said to them, in substance: " Yes, indeed, for us in Russia,

Currently, it's quite difficult. But, all the same, what consoles us is that it will be up to you to manage the Poles. »

Putin was optimistic. We do not know today whether Poland sent 10,000 or 20,000 “volunteers” to Ukraine, where they confront the Russian army.

Re-reading by chance, after having written these lines, the foreword by David Schoenbaum to the French reissue of *The Brown Revolution*, his brilliant book on the de facto social democratization of Germany carried out by Nazism, I found this astonishing intuition:

For post-communist Poland, Hungary and perhaps even Slovakia, it's a completely different matter [*than East Germany*]. Strongly agrarian, residually feudal, fiercely anti-Semitic, authoritarian and irredentist before the war, they emerged from the four decades of communism and Soviet hegemony which followed the conict, as "normal" and different as the Republic of Bonn under Adenauer could have been from the Kaiser's Germany or Hitler's empire [...].

I have neither the qualifications nor the energy required to embark on a study of the Red Revolution and its impact on post-communist Europe. But if this book could set in motion the imagination of a researcher [...] I would be

happy [...] <sup>1</sup> .

For my part, I am stunned to see the modernization of Eastern Europe by Soviet, and therefore Russian, domination mentioned in the year 2000. The pragmatic intuition of Schoenbaum (to whom I owe so much intellectually, I now realize) confirms me in the idea that the persistent Russophobia of the old popular democracies could quite simply result from an unconscious and repressed historical debt, unacceptable, inadmissible, towards the former occupant.

### ***The Hungarian exception***

Eastern Europe does not interest Westerners; they consider it as an undifferentiated mass. It is true, as we have seen, that on the economic and social level there are common points between the former popular democracies. The fact remains that this world has a very diverse history which can contribute, for example, to explaining the behavior of Hungarians today.

Take religion. In Poland we find a Catholicism which, although real, was not as important before the war as is believed and which was armed during Soviet domination as an instrument of national resistance. In the recent period, it has collapsed in a particularly brutal way, as indicated by the Polish fertility rate, which is one of the lowest in the area: 1.2, as in Ukraine. At this level of intensity, birth control signals the death of Catholicism. Elsewhere, there are other traditions. Part of the Bohemian advance, which became

Czech Republic, dates back to the development, from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, of Hussite proto-Protestantism. The Habsburg Empire eradicated it, along with the military class and the Czech nobility, but without succeeding in profoundly recatholicizing the country. Bohemia is classified as Catholic, although it is a formal Catholicism, much like in the Garonne valley where, Protestantism having also been eradicated, appeared in the

XVIII<sup>e</sup> century dechristianization and a decline in fertility early.

The most original religious history is that of Hungary. Simplified maps designate her as Catholic. During the interwar period, emerging, diminished, from the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it actually had a Catholic majority. But there were also, as we have seen, 5% Jews, to which must be added 20% Calvinists. The presence so far to the East of this important Protestant minority is curiously explained by the domination temporarily exercised there by the Ottoman Empire. HAS

At the time of the Counter-Reformation, he controlled roughly a third of Hungarian territory and found no interest in eliminating Protestantism as the Habsburgs did in their empire. And we can still admire, in the east of the country, Debrecen, the Hungarian Geneva. Viktor Orban is, moreover, of Calvinist origin.

This substantial Calvinist minority was undoubtedly one of the keys to Hungarian historical dynamics. A religion of progress, educational in any case, Calvinism has simultaneously encouraged national sentiment and protected against anti-Semitism: the good Calvinist in fact identifies with Israel. In the following chapters we will see this mechanism functioning on a larger scale: the English, the Scots and the Americans took turns, taking themselves for the chosen people. Hungary is very patriotic and the country in the zone where anti-Semitism has been the least virulent: after 1968, for example, unlike Poland or Czechoslovakia, the

anti-Semitic buoy of aging Sovietism spared it. Previously, under the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy, it had succeeded – unique case in the area – in integrating (to Magyarize, in this case) its Jewish population, which was the only one of Eastern Europe to massively abandon Yiddish for the Magyar language (non-Indo-European in addition) rather than for German. Its richest members were ennobled and joined the ranks of the aristocracy. The result was the most patriotic Jewish population in Eastern Europe. It was, it is true, a recent immigrant population, coming from Poland, Lithuania or elsewhere, attracted by the great capital that was (and remains) Budapest, seduced by a nationalist but assimilative Hungarian culture. .

Hungarians feel they have suffered a historic defeat. They hardly forgave the Treaty of Trianon which left Magyar minorities in neighboring countries. But, looking at the history of all of Eastern Europe, Hungary seems to me to be, on a deep level, the safest nation to exist. This diagnosis



**sheds light on another singularity: the Hungarian government is not Russophobic.**

**Orban is regularly accused of playing into Putin's hands within the EU, by refusing or blocking certain sanctions. But before judging him, let us ask ourselves why the only people's democracies that rose up against Russia in 1956 showed an understanding attitude towards Moscow.**

**Let us first note the existence of a Hungarian minority in the Ukrainian province of Uzhhorod. The Kiev government's policy of linguistic unification is not well received by these Magyar speakers, and we understand that the prospect of being killed to recover a Donbass full of Russians does not excite them and that it does not leave the Budapest government indifferent. But I sense a deeper reason. The Hungarians were able to forgive the Russians for having violently repressed them because they dared to confront them with weapons in their hands.**

**The absence of Russophobia is not in contradiction with the 1956 uprising, he explains. After 1956, the Russians granted Hungary a separate, liberal status in the Soviet sphere; Hungary was then spoken of as the “happiest barrack in the camp”. And Kadar, the leader chosen by Moscow, invented this astonishingly pragmatic slogan: “He who is not against us is with us. » It was this self-confidence that allowed the Hungarians to open their border in 1989 and bring down the Iron Curtain; it is this which allows them today not to sink into Russophobia.**

**I am evoking historical hypotheses that are not technically demonstrable, but which we desperately need to orient ourselves in a reasonable and prudent manner. While the Ukrainian conflict could escalate, we cannot afford to always look at Eastern Europe as an undifferentiated and incidental mass.**

**There as in Ukraine, and here, I am convinced that, like any designation of a scapegoat, Russophobia reveals a**

deficiency in those who experience it. If it tells us nothing about Russia, it does tell us about the Ukrainians, the Poles, the Swedes, the English, the French or American middle classes. We will examine these various Western cases in the following chapters. Eastern Europe, for its part, is plagued by a grating inauthenticity. It is presented as being democratic and liberal by nature, while criticizing Poland and Hungary for sometimes giving in to conservative reexecutives. The reality is that all these countries, despite their diversity, are dominated by middle classes manufactured by communism and which, once liberated, put their proletariats at the service of Western capitalism.

1. See Oliver Radkey, *Russia Goes to the Polls*, *op. cit.*

2. Nicolas Werth, "Who were the first Chekists? », *Cahiers du monde russe*, 1991, 32-4, p. 501-512.

3. *Let's kiss, Folleville!* is a comedy by Eugène Labiche and Auguste Lefranc performed for the first time in Paris in 1850. "Let's kiss, Folleville! » has become an ironic allusion to displays of friendship that deny problems.

4. Max Weber, *The City, The Discovery*, 2014, p. 74-78.

5. Iván T. Berend, *Decades of Crisis. Central and Eastern Europe before Word War II*, University of California Press, 1998.

6. These figures, like the following, are those for 2021. Source: World Bank.

7. David Schoenbaum, *The Brown Revolution*, Les Belles Lettres, 2021, p. XVI.

8. Romania too, for other reasons. See Paul Lendvai (a Hungarian Jew of origin), *Anti-Semitism without Jews*, Fayard, 1971.

## CHAPTER 4

# ***What is the West?***

Traveling through the former Soviet sphere, we found that Russia had regained stability and a certain type of economic dynamism, but that its demographic future forbade any hope of expansion. Obviously, this is not where we should look for the origin of the disruptions that the world is going through. The examination of Ukraine, a country in disintegration, has shed more light on this matter. However, its modest size would make it incapable of dragging the planet into vast upheaval alone. Finally, we were interested in the former popular democracies, to which I added the Baltic republics. It appeared that these countries, throughout their history, have been objects with which, not so much Russia, but the West has played. But here again, and despite Poland's diplomatic and possibly military aggressiveness, it would be a mistake to make this area responsible for the crisis we are experiencing.

To find its origin, you have to cross the old iron curtain; it is in the West, more than in Russia, Ukraine or the former popular democracies, that the crisis was born. Rejecting the idea that Russia is primarily responsible is, I admit,

from the ; the hypothesis is counterintuitive. Didn't she attack Ukraine? Is she not flouting the principles of liberal democracy at home? The fact remains that all objective indicators have improved, that it is a country which has recently regained its balance and is striving to preserve it. I would be tempted to say that in the eyes of the geopolitician Russia is not interesting; but I am aware that this is asking the reader to make an effort of imagination, to shake off his possible submission to the evidence of war.

The West is not stable; he is even sick. We will detail this cruel truth in this and the following chapters.

But it is not only in crisis, it occupies a central position.

Its demographic or economic weight, seven to ten times greater than that of Russia, its technological advance, its ideological and financial predominance inherited from the economic history of the years 1700-2000 inevitably lead us to hypothesize that its crisis is the crisis of the world.

Let's start by denigrating the West in a serious way, that is to say by discarding the clichés which associate it exclusively with liberal democracy. I will continue to talk about the economy, of course, since the crisis in the West manifests itself in war through serious industrial deficiencies, but also in family structures, as I did for Russia and Ukraine. Above all, I will give crucial importance to religion. At the origin and at the heart of Western development, we do not find the market, industry and technology, but, as I announced in the introduction, a particular religion, Protestantism. I thus behave as a good student of Max Weber, who placed the religion of Luther and Calvin at the source of what appeared in his time as the superiority of the West. But more than a century after the publication of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in 1904 and 1905, we can move beyond Weber in an unprecedented way. If, as it weapons it, Protestantism was indeed the matrix of the take-off of the West, its death, today, is the cause of its disintegration, and more prosaically of its defeat.

I include the long duration of religious history in the immediate geopolitical analysis. The exercise is difficult but essential if we intend to predict with plausibility and efficiency. To predict whether a decline, partial or total, is reversible, one must know what caused the rise. And not just in the economic field. To explain the evaporation of the nation-state, we must identify the forces that allowed its birth.

## ***The two Wests***

How to deny the West? Two possibilities present themselves to us. Firstly that of a broad definition in terms of educational take-off and economic development. This West would include, if we stick to the large countries, alongside England, the United States and France, Italy, Germany and Japan. This is the current West of politicians and journalists, that of a NATO enlarged to include the Japanese protectorate. The other possible definition, narrower, takes as a criterion of inclusion participation in the liberal and democratic revolution. We then obtain a more select club which only includes England, the United States and France. The English *Glorious Revolution* of 1688, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789 are the founding events of this narrow liberal West.

The West in the broad sense is therefore not historically “liberal” since it also generated Italian fascism, German Nazism and Japanese militarism.

We are assured (rightly) that these three countries have changed. But current Western discourse locks Russia, and Russia alone, into a despotic eternity oscillating between Tsarist autocracy and Stalinist totalitarianism. Putin, when he is not assimilated to the demon, is either a new Stalin or a new tsar. If we applied the same criteria to the West (in the broad sense)

ahistorical ones that deny Russia the right to evolve, we would discover that it is very far from the image it has of itself today. It would always carry, to one degree or another, a violence coming, not directly from fascism, Nazism or militarism, but from a mysterious cultural element which would eternally animate Italian, German and Japanese histories. . The analysis of family structures certainly makes it possible to identify elements of continuity in national histories, in particular the authoritarianism of stem or community families. But it is clear that today's Italy is not that of Mussolini, nor today's Germany that of Hitler. And that today's Russia is something very different from communist Russia or Tsarist Russia.

I will adopt, in the following pages, the broad denition of the West, quite simply because it corresponds to the American system of power, but keeping in mind the simultaneous existences of a liberal West and a Authoritarian West. The latter could have included Russia if the advances it made in the years 1990-2006 had been accepted.

In the West thus denied, economic development occurred earlier than in other regions of the world. Two cultural revolutions explain this takeoff: the Italian Renaissance and German Protestantism. Our modernity was born in an authoritarian zone.

Max Weber establishes a link between Protestantism and the economic growth of Europe, even if he probably got lost in looking for the reasons for the takeoff in subtle theological nuances. The fundamental factor is simpler: Protestantism in principle makes the populations it controls literate because all Christians must have direct access to the Holy Scriptures. However, a literate population is capable of technological and economic development. The Protestant religion modeled, by accident, a superiorly efficient work force. In this sense, Germany was at the heart of the

**Western development, even if the industrial revolution took place in Great Britain, and even if the most spectacular final takeoff was that of the United States. If we add Scandinavia, Protestant and early literate, we get the map of the most advanced world on the eve of the First World War. This Protestant center of the West is, if I may say so, straddling its liberal and authoritarian components since one of its poles is the Anglo-Saxon world and the other Germany (two-thirds Protestant). France is the Catholic country which, by virtue of contiguity, has managed to remain in the most developed sphere of**

**In terms of social conceptions, the entire Protestant sphere has shared, to one degree or another, the idea, inherited from the doctrine of predestination, that there are the elect and the damned, and that men, therefore, , are not equal. A frank inequality in Germany, attenuated in the Netherlands, England and America, but which, in all cases, opposed the Catholic (or Orthodox) idea of a fundamental equality of men, cleansed of sin original through baptism. It is therefore not surprising that the two most powerful or stable forms of racism appeared in Protestant countries. Nazism was established in the Lutheran regions of Germany: the Nazi vote in 1932 was that of Protestantism. As for Americans' fixation on blacks, it also has a lot to do with Protestantism. Let us mention, finally, eugenics and forced sterilizations, notably in Nazi Germany, in Sweden between 1935 and 1976 and in the United States between 1907 and 1981, the logical result of a Protestant background which does not recognize**

**Protestantism is therefore doubly at the heart of the history of the West, for the better with the educational and then economic growth, and for the worse with the idea that men are unequal. It was also the prime mover in the development of nation-states. The French are mistaken when th**

revolution invented the nation. It was Protestantism which first gave people such a representation of themselves, this particular form of collective consciousness. Indeed, by demanding that the Bible be translated into the vernacular language, Luther and his disciples contributed greatly to the formation of national cultures and powerful, warlike, self-aware states: Cromwell's England, Sweden of Gustavus Adolphe or the Prussia of Frederick II. With Protestantism, people appeared who, by reading the Bible too much, believed themselves chosen by God.

Original Protestantism was authoritarian in temperament. Luther advocated absolute submission of the individual to the State, but the triumph of an authoritarian form of Protestantism in Germany can be explained above all by an anthropological predisposition. The German ethnic family had nothing to envy, in this matter, of the Russian community family. Only one of the children was called to live with the father (and not all the children as in Russia), a mechanism which produced a more stable social order. No equality of brothers gnawed at him, no association of brothers against the father threatened him, no radical revolutionary aspiration (against the Tsar or God) could defeat him.

Protestant England, in contrast, distinguished itself by the flourishing of freedom, that of Parliament and that of the press. That liberal democracy was born there rather than elsewhere hardly surprises the anthropologist. His absolute nuclear family never had more than a couple and their children living together, who left their parents as teenagers, sent as servants to other families (whatever the level of wealth). Such a system prepares individuals for freedom, it even instills in them a liberal unconscious. The English colonists exported it to America. In France, at least in the Paris Basin, the nuclear family was egalitarian, since brothers and sisters were equal in terms of inheritance, while in the



Anglo-Saxon world this rule of equality between children did not exist. The anthropology of family structures allows us to understand why and how England, America and France contributed to the gestation of liberal democracy. The nuclear fund could nourish an instinctive liberalism there.

Confronted in 1789 with the violent emergence of the French egalitarian foundation, England was, of course, at first horrified; but, once the Hexagon was appeased, it instead gained a stimulus to achieve its own version of universal surage. As for the United States, they were able very early to overcome the absence of an egalitarian principle in family life thanks to a fixation on the idea of social inferiority on Indians and blacks. The equality of whites among themselves, however, proved to be a less solid principle, as we will see, than the equality of men in general.

The broad definition of the West, one that includes Germany, makes the idea of a radical opposition with Russia curious to say the least. We rather have the impression of cousinhood, of partial historical complicity, notably in the birth of totalitarianism, the original family allowing Nazism, the community family communism. But, even if we stick to the second, more restrictive denition, of a West as the birthplace of liberal democracy, we are confronted with an absurdity.

The West today proclaims that it represents liberal democracy against Russian autocracy (for example). However, in its Anglo-American-French hard core, which actually invented liberal democracy, it is declining.

## ***Defend a democracy that no longer exists***

In the unanimous discourse on the war, as it appears in the major newspapers or on television sets, it goes without saying that the United States, Great Britain and France are

liberal democracies. It is to forget that this self-presentation *in the war* is in complete contradiction with the discourse that these same countries have been holding about themselves for twenty or thirty years *internally*. That Western democracies are in crisis, and even that we live in post-democracy, has become a commonplace.

I spoke about it in 2008 in my book *After Democracy* and, even at the time, I did not have the impression of being crazy

original <sup>1</sup>. Since then, with Brexit and Trump helping, the works catastrophists on this issue have multiplied on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States got the ball rolling early, in 1995 with the publication of Christopher Lasch's posthumous work, *The*

*Elite revolt and the betrayal of democracy* In 1996, Michael Lind <sup>2</sup> published *The Next American Nation. The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution*, which also expresses dismay

American <sup>3</sup>. The same Lind signed, in 2020, *The New Class War.*

*Saving Democracy from the Metropolitan Elite* <sup>4</sup>. The evidence of a new oligarchy undermining the democratic foundations of the country can also be found in *The New Class Conict* by Joel Kotkin, released in 2014 <sup>5</sup>.

On the British side, *Post-Democracy* by Colin Crouch dates from 2020, but it is the resumption and development of a book originally written in 2003 (five years before my own *After the*

*democracy*) <sup>6</sup>. Let's also quote *From Anger to Apathy. The British*

*Experience since 1975* <sup>7</sup>, or *The Road to Somewhere. The Populist*

*Revolt and the Future of Politics* by David Goodhart (2017) <sup>8</sup> and *The New Snobbery. Taking on Modern Elitism and Empowering the*

*Working Class* by David Skelton (2021) <sup>9</sup>. As for France, let's remember *Peripheral France. How we sacrificed the*

*working classes*, by Christophe Guilluy (2014) <sup>10</sup>, *Democracy*

***Is representation in crisis ?*, by Luc Rouban (2018)**

<sup>11</sup>, And

***The French Archipelago*, by Jérôme Fourquet (2019)**

<sup>12</sup>. Even

**Germany is concerned: *Die Abstiegs-gesellschaft. Über das***

***Aufbegehren in der regressiven Moderne*, by Oliver Nachtwey, date of**

**2016** <sup>13</sup> and was translated in 2018 into English under the title ***Germany's***

***Hidden Crisis. Social Decline in the Heart of Europe***.<sup>14</sup>

This enumeration, very far from being exhaustive and which the following chapters will complete with other titles, is only intended to show that the idea of a Western democracy in terminal crisis has nothing eccentric or marginal; it is banal, admitted, certainly with nuances, by a good number of intellectuals and politicians.

Let us try to identify an ideal type of this democratic degeneration. To do this, it is appropriate to first identify an ideal type of liberal democracy, or, more modestly, to describe it briefly. Its framework is a nation-state in which citizens understand each other more or less, most often but not always thanks to the existence of a common language. Universal elections take place there. Partisan pluralism, freedom of expression and of the press are ensured. Finally, a fundamental feature: we apply majority rule while ensuring the protection of minorities.

Explicit laws do not, however, make a country a liberal democracy. These laws must be activated, embodied, lived by the grace of democratic morals. The representatives elected by the universal council must consider themselves, absolutely, as the representatives of the people who elected them. As for the concordance between laws and morals, it has been

made possible in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through widespread literacy.

If I see the ability to read and write as the foundation of democracy, it is not simply because literacy allows you to tear up newspapers and choose your ballot,

but because it nourishes a feeling of, so to speak, metaphysical equality between all citizens. Reading and writing, which was the exclusive domain of the priest, is now the preserve of all men. However, this feeling of basic democratic equality seems, at the start of the third millennium, to have dried up. The development of higher education has neither given 30 or 40% of a generation the feeling of being truly superior: a mass elite, an oxymoron which introduces the bizarreness of the situation.

Before the Ukrainian war, therefore, observers perceived Western democracies as undermined by an evil that was getting worse. This evil brings two major ideological and mental categories face to face, elitism and populism: the elites denounce a drift of the people towards the xenophobic right and the people suspect the elites of sinking into a delusional “globalism”. If the people and the elite no longer agree to function together, the notion of representative democracy no longer makes sense: we end up with an elite who no longer wants to represent the people and a people who are no longer represented. Journalists and politicians are, according to opinion polls, the two least respected professions in the majority of “Western democracies”. Conspiracy is spreading, a specific pathology of a social system structured by the elitism/populism couple, by social distrust.

The democratic ideal, without going as far as the dream of perfect economic equality for all citizens, included the notion of a rapprochement of social conditions. In the phase of maximum democracy after the Second World War, it was even possible to imagine, in the United States and then elsewhere, that the proletariat and bourgeoisie would merge into a vast middle class. In recent decades, however, we have witnessed, on the contrary, a rise in inequalities, although of varying magnitude depending on the country. This phenomenon, associated with free trade, has indeed pulverized the traditional classes but by degrading the material conditions and access to employment of workers and

middle classes themselves. Once again, what I am describing is confoundingly banal: an observation on which everyone agrees.

The representative of the people, a member of the mass elite who has completed higher education, no longer respects the people of primary and secondary education and cannot help deep down, whatever his partisan label, from feeling the values of the educated superiors as the only legitimate ones. He is one of them, these values are himself, and everything else is, in his eyes, meaningless, empty; it will never be able to represent any alternative.

## ***Liberal oligarchies against Russian authoritarian democracy***

I am going to reclassify the political systems described in our media, our universities and during our electoral competitions as Western ***liberal democracies*** confronting Russian ***autocracy*** through Ukraine. The adjective “liberal”, added to “democracy”, expresses the protection of minorities which moderates the strength of the majority principle. In the case of Russia, where we vote and support the government, with imperfections that silence minorities, I kept the idea of democracy but substituted “authoritarian” for “liberal” as a qualifying adjective. . In the case of the West, the dysfunction of majority representation prevents us from retaining the term “democracy”.

There is nothing, however, to prevent us from keeping the term “liberal” since the protection of minorities has become the obsession of the West. We most often think of the oppressed, Blacks or homosexuals, but the best protected minority in the West is undoubtedly that of the rich, whether they represent 1% of the population, 0.1% or 0.01%. In Russia, neither homosexuals nor

**oligarchs are not protected. Our liberal democracies are therefore becoming “liberal oligarchies”.**

**The ideological meaning of war is changing. Announced by dominant thought as the struggle of the liberal democracies of the West against Russian autocracy, it becomes a confrontation between the liberal oligarchies of the West and Russian authoritarian democracy.**

**The objective of this reclassification of the West and Russia is not to denounce the former but to better understand its war objectives, its strengths and its weaknesses.**

**Several important points can already be underlined: – We are indeed confronting two opposing systems on the ideological level, even if the opposition is not the one that was presented to us. It is sociologically normal, so to speak, that the parties which represent the dominated working class or petty bourgeois circles (in France the National Rally and France Insoumise, in Germany the AfD, in the United States Donald Trump) are suspected of sympathy for Putin. The dominant elites fear that the lower strata of society will lean towards Russia, whose authoritarian democratic values are reminiscent of a characteristic feature of Western populism.**

**– We understand better that liberal oligarchies have adopted economic sanctions as a means of war: it is the lower strata of Western societies who suffer the most from inflation and the drop in living standards.**

**– The chaotic functioning of liberal oligarchies produces diplomatically incompetent elites, and therefore major errors in the management of the conflict with Russia and China. This structural dysfunction deserves attention**

**A little.**

**What is completely singular about Western oligarchies is that their institutions and their laws have not**

exchange. Formally, we are still dealing with liberal democracies, blessed with universal security, parliaments and sometimes elected presidents and a free press. Democratic morals, on the other hand, have disappeared. The upper educated classes think they are intrinsically superior and the elites, as we have said, refuse to represent the people, relegated to behavior described as populist. We would be very wrong to consider that such a system can function harmoniously, naturally. People remain literate and the basis of universal literacy, on which the new educational stratification is superimposed, is still alive. The oligarchic dysfunction of liberal democracies must therefore be ordered and controlled. What does this mean? Quite simply that, with elections remaining, the people must be kept away from economic management and the distribution of wealth, in a word: deceived. It is work for the political class, it has even become *the work* to which they devote themselves as a priority. Hence: the hysterization of racial or ethnic problems and the ineffective chatter on subjects that are nevertheless serious: ecology, the status of women or global warming.

All this has a negative relationship with geopolitics, diplomacy and war. Absorbed by their new profession - winning elections which are nothing more than plays but require, like real theatre, specific skills and work, members of the Western political classes no longer have the time to train in management international relations. So they arrive on the big stage of the world lacking the necessary basic knowledge. Worse, accustomed to triumphing over the less educated at home, laboriously but most often successfully (that's their job), and thereby thinking of themselves as confirmed in their intrinsic superiority, they find themselves in the presence of real adversaries, whom they hardly impress and who have had the time to think about the world and, it must be admitted, have not had to spend as much energy in the preparation of the Russian elections or in the balance of power

internal to the Chinese Communist Party. We are beginning to perceive the real technical inferiority of Joe Biden or Emmanuel Macron compared to Vladimir Putin or Xi Jinping, and to understand the reasons.

## ***A non-reversible process***

The new educational stratification has indeed created highly educated people who look down on those educated at primary and secondary level, who, in turn, look down on them. The degeneration of liberal democracies does not, however, boil down to a war from the top of society against the bottom. In close association with the massive rise in living standards, educational stratification has exploded collective beliefs and forces.

Beyond the opposition between populism and elitism, we can grasp a phenomenon of social atomization, of pulverization of identities, which affects all levels of society.

The author who seems to me to have best felt and described this decomposition in politics is Peter Mair, in *Ruling the Void* <sup>15</sup> One of his most interesting intuitions is that, in a situation of general atomization, of vacuum, the State rises in power. It's logic. If society is broken down into individuals, the state apparatus takes on particular importance.

Religion, or rather its disintegration, as I said above, is at the heart of my model. Christianity was the original religious matrix of all our subsequent collective beliefs: throughout Europe, the nation or the class; in France specifically, radical socialism, socialism, communism, Gaullism; in Britain, laborism and conservatism; in Germany, social democracy and Nazism and, obviously, Christian democracy. In America, religion



Protestantism structured social life in interaction with racial sentiment. The patchy decomposition of the Christian religion revealed, initially, between the

XVIII<sup>e</sup> and the XX<sup>e</sup> century, these collective substitution beliefs. I traced the history of dechristianization, or secularization, in *The Invention of Europe* by measuring the decline in Sunday practice and the recruitment of priests: first fall of half of Catholicism, in the Paris Basin, on the Mediterranean coast of France, southern Italy, central and

southern Spain and Portugal, in the middle of the 18th century<sup>e</sup>; second fall, this time that of Protestantism as a whole, between 1870 and 1930; third and final fall of what remained of Catholicism from 1960, simultaneously in South and Rhine Germany, in Belgium, in the south of the Netherlands, on the periphery of France, in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, in Italy North, in Switzerland, in Ireland. This decline in religious practice and supervision led to a first, *zombie* state of secularization, in which most of the morals and values of the disappeared religion remained (notably the ability for collective action). . The concept of zombie Catholicism, developed to understand the relative dynamism of certain regions of France in the turbulence of globalization, and which I used to tear up the map of demonstrations in support of *Charlie* in 2015, proves to be applicable to all general fact. The zombie state of a religion is, however, only a first phase of secularization, which cannot be described as a truly post-religious state. It is then that replacement beliefs appear, generally strong political ideologies which organize and structure individuals as religion did. Upset by the disappearance of God, societies nevertheless remain coherent and capable of action. The nation-state, often fiercely nationalist, is typically the manifestation of a zombie state of religion, with this reservation that Protestantism had succeeded in

**generate nation-states even before its own disappearance. Always, it has been a national religion and its pastors basically were civil servants.**

**The zombie state is not the end of the journey. The morals and values inherited from religion wither away or explode, and finally disappear; and then, but only then, appears what we are experiencing, the absolute religious void, with individuals deprived of any collective belief of substitution. A zero state of religion. This is when the nation-state disintegrates and globalization triumphs, in atomized societies where we can no longer even imagine that the State can act effectively. I say “the individual deprived of all collective belief” rather than “liberated” because, as we will see, he finds himself diminished rather than increased by the void.**

**The duration of the process shows to what extent it implies within it a non-reversibility of itself and its consequences. The original religious matrix was slowly constructed between the end of the Roman Empire and the central Middle Ages, then ultimately strengthened by the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. If it is the arrival at a zero religious state which has caused the disappearance of national feeling, the work ethic, the notion of a binding social morality, the capacity to sacrifice for the community, all these things whose absence given the fragility of the West in the war, it becomes obvious that they will not reappear in the next five years, the space of time that I have given to the Russians to carry out their war.**

### ***Religion: active, zombie and zero states***

**How to characterize the zero state of a religion? The values of this religion, organizers of social life, morality, collective action, as we have said, no longer count. The social space and**

moral that it once occupied guarantees us that the zero state affects innumerable areas: not only work and the nation, but also family and sexual behavior, art as well as the relationship with money. There is, however, a fairly simple empirical method for distinguishing the three phases – active, zombie and zero – of the Christian religion, all branches combined, and marking the transitions from one phase to the other. At the active stage, attendance at the Sunday service is strong. At the zombie stage, Sunday practice has disappeared but the three rites of passage which accompany birth, marriage and death remain framed by Christian heritage. A zombie Christian population no longer goes to mass but mostly continues to have its children baptized, including in most Protestant denominations where the baptism of newborns does not have the same centrality as in Catholicism. At the other end of life, a zombie Christian society will continue to reject cremation, which was long rejected by the Church. Christian stage zero is therefore characterized by the disappearance of baptism and a massive increase in cremation. We live through all of this.

Finally, there is marriage. Civil marriage of the zombie period retains, in its obligations and in its relationship to procreation, the essential features of Christian marriage. The anthropologist is therefore fortunate to have, so to speak, an official date for the disappearance of the Christian form of marriage: that of the establishment of “marriage for all”. If same-sex marriage is considered equivalent to opposite-sex marriage, then we can argue that the society concerned has reached a zero state of religion.

It is above all a question here, of course, of resuming the controversies which surrounded the legalization of "marriage for all", but of considering it, coldly, as an excellent anthropological marker, which makes it possible to establish the absolute end of Christianity as a social force. In the Netherlands it is: 2001.

**In Belgium: 2003. In Spain and Canada: 2005. In Sweden and Norway: 2009. In Denmark: 2012. In France: 2013. In the United Kingdom: 2014 (but in Northern Ireland: 2020 only).**

**In Germany: 2017. In Finland: 2017 too. As for the United States, Massachusetts legalized it in 2004, but it was generalized across the country in 2015.**

**We can therefore deny the 2000s as the years of the effective disappearance of Christianity in the West, in a precise and absolute way. We also note a convergence in the nothingness of Catholics and Protestants. Eastern Europe is not concerned and Italy, as required by the Vatican, still only has civil unions.**

### ***Nihilistic headlong flight***

**One of the great illusions of the 1960s – between the Anglo-American sexual revolution and the French May 68 – was to believe that the individual would be greater once freed from the collective (*mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* !). It's quite the opposite. The individual can only be great in and through a community. Alone, it is doomed by nature to shrink. Now that we are liberated en masse from metaphysical beliefs, founding and derived, communist, socialist or national, we experience emptiness, and we become smaller. We become a multitude of mimetic dwarves who no longer dare to think for themselves – but still prove to be just as capable of intolerance as the believers of old.**

**Collective beliefs in effect are not just ideas that individuals share and which allow them to act together. They structure them. By instilling in them moral rules approved by others, they transform them. This society at work within the individual itself, this is what**

psychoanalysis we call the superego. Nowadays, this concept has a bad press: it evokes an unsympathetic control body which represses and prevents “personal development”. But, in the minds of Freud and many others, the superego is also an ego ideal, which allows the individual to rise above his immediate desires, to be better and more than himself. even. Before the Freudian ego ideal, there had been “consciousness,” and it implied the existence of others. Listening to one's conscience and examining one's conscience were imperatives of Christian origin. In the zombie state of religion, society remained capable of injecting an ego ideal into the individual and the concept of consciousness remained fully active.

I am of course schematizing, I am exaggerating, by presenting major trends as completely realized.

The zero religious state reflects a void and, tendentially, a deficiency of the superego. It denies nothing, nothingness, but for a human being who despite everything does not cease to exist and continues to experience the anguish of human nitude. This nothing, this nothingness, will therefore still produce something, a reaction, in all directions: some admirable, others stupid, others abject. Nihilism, which idolizes nothing, seems to me the most banal.

It is omnipresent in the West, in Europe and across the Atlantic.

It is in anthropological systems of an individualistic nuclear type, French but especially Anglo-American, – where no residual family framework remains – that it spreads in its completed form. Traces of zombie stem family (in Germany, Japan) or zombie community (in Russia) are still “something” more than the individualistic nuclear void. It is therefore not surprising, as we will soon discover, if the Anglo-American world, characterized by zero Protestantism in an absolute nuclear environment, is currently the scene of the most obvious manifestations of nihilism. But

**Let us begin by examining how continental Europe, where more complex family forms persist, lost all will in the face of war.**

- [1.](#) Emmanuel Todd, *After democracy*, Gallimard, 2008.
- [2.](#) Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, Climats, 1996.
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## CHAPTER 5

### ***Assisted suicide in Europe***

Europe finds itself engaged in a war profoundly contrary to its interests, self-destructive, even though, for at least thirty years, its promoters have been selling us an ever deeper Union which, thanks to the euro, would become an autonomous power, counterweight to the giants China and the United States. The European Union has disappeared behind NATO, now more submissive to the United States than it had ever been.

I said it: the Berlin-Paris axis has been supplanted by a London-Warsaw-kyiv axis managed from Washington, reinforced by the Scandinavian and Baltic countries which have become direct satellites of the White House or the Pentagon.

The Europeans' initial reaction of fear to the invasion of Ukraine was completely understandable. For all those involved, the return of war caused a major shock; and among the Russian leaders the decision to resort to arms had a dramatic character that we must understand, not with the aim of exonerating them but to better evaluate their subsequent decisions and anticipate their future actions. In Western Europe, thousands of politicians, journalists and academics, accustomed to living in private, professed at that time a

neo-Kantian perpetual peace; they had become spectators rather than actors in real history, which includes war; Worse still, they traveled through History as tourists, intent on building Europe with words, smoking out their people, like one plays Monopoly in the evening during the holidays. The irruption of reality immediately provoked an absurd reaction among them, which they thought would save them from war, when on the contrary it precipitated them into it, by widening it. It stood to reason that Western sanctions would bring Russia to its knees. The self-satisfaction of our elites, which extends to the social system they embody, was sincere. Our Minister of Economy and Finance, Bruno Le

Mayor, announced on March 1<sup>er</sup>, 2022 on France Info in these terms: "The sanctions are effective, the economic and financial sanctions are even fearsomely effective. [...] We are going to cause the collapse of the Russian economy. » The most serious thing is not so much that they failed, but that our leaders were incapable of foreseeing that, far from stopping the war, they would make it global. As explained, a month before the conflict, Nicholas Mulder in *The Economic Weapon. The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War*, economic sanctions, designed and implemented between 1914 and 1918 with the blockade of the Central Powers by the Allies, which caused hundreds of thousands of deaths,

inevitably imply that neutral countries take sides Blocking a <sup>1</sup>. country of 17 million square kilometers, which straddles Europe and Asia, between Poland and China, suddenly transformed the modest "special military operation" , launched by the Russians to obtain a rectification of the border and prevent Ukraine from joining NATO, during World War III. I doubt that Bruno Le Maire, an over-graduate from our major schools and a novelist, was aware of this. Only a world military power, the United States, could, on the Western side, wage a world war. Sanctions signed



therefore in themselves the end of Europe. But European leaders also had excellent reasons to commit suicide on the Union.

The self-destructive nature of the sanctions was quickly reflected in a massive increase in inflation rates, which had no counterpart in Russia and which was also less in the United States. That these leaders refused to take into account the energy dependence of our continent reveals in them a quite remarkable oligarchic and liberal peace of mind.

It is the weak who suffer from the inflation, in this case a rise in prices of an unprecedented magnitude since the end of the 1940s. A war of inflation. But the nature of our social system being fundamentally and increasingly unequal, we should not be surprised. The problem, however, is more serious. The disruption of Russian gas supplies and the rising cost of energy threaten what remains of our industry and bring us back to the possibility of suicide. The euro zone's trade balance went from a positive value of 116 billion in 2021 to a negative value of 400 billion in 2022.

Let us not forget that the cost of the war for Europe includes the interruption of economic relations with Russia, including the compulsory closure of the branches of European companies established there, a measure which particularly affects France. The joy with which journalists from our press, *Le Monde* in the lead, set out to track down in Russia the residue of the activity of French companies, such as the Auchan group, without being too interested in the energy profits of our American allies or even more Norwegian (in 2021, Norway was the world's fourth largest exporter of natural gas) was astonishing. Our press sometimes gives the impression that the destruction of the French economy, even more than that of Russia, is its objective. We think of a child who, mad with rage, breaks his own toys; and the expression "economic nihilism" comes to mind.

It was clearly felt, at the beginning, that the French and, even more so, the German governments were reluctant to get too involved in the war. Chancellor Scholz resisted for a time the combined pressures of the German press, the Americans and his European neighbors; Emmanuel Macron, too, resisted the press a little and chatted without limits with Putin - to the point of inspiring a new verb in the Russian language, *macroner*, "to speak to say nothing", and its Ukrainian variant "to express one's concern and do nothing." But, gradually, these reluctances dissipated and these countries which are at the heart of the Union have, at least in appearance, accepted everything. The Germans sent Leopard tanks; the French delivered Scalp missiles. The last reserves were swept away even though an extraordinary event had just occurred: the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines. For my part, I accept the reconstruction of the facts carried out by Seymour Hersh, because it is, to date, the only probable account: the attack was decided by the Americans, and carried out with the help of the Norwegians. .

Norway's involvement will hardly come as a surprise. Energy interests aside, this country, which refused to join the European Union but is one of the founding members of NATO, has a long and very honorable tradition of military association with the Anglo-American world. It dates back to the Second World War, when, after the German invasion, its civil fleet crossed over en masse to the British side and played an appreciable role in the Battle of the Atlantic. The fact remains that, since the interruption of Russian gas supplies, Norway has become one of the leading gas suppliers to the Union. Its trade surplus is colossal.

That the Germans unflinchingly accepted that their protector dynamited an essential element of their energy system was a prodigious act of submission. Germany's silence also undoubtedly conceals a cautious wait-and-see attitude, which keeps its options open.

Months have passed and the mystery of a Western Europe which, without being the main supplier of arms to Ukraine, nevertheless bears the main economic weight of the war is deepening. Since the failure of the Ukrainian counter-offensive launched on June 4, 2023, with inadequate weaponry and without air cover – Western decency obliges – we know that Russia will not be defeated. Why, then, settle into a war without n? The obstinacy of European leaders is becoming fascinating. Official war aims are based on an aberrant vision of reality. Rejecting the "emotional" mode which dominates the media to blind some of our leaders as much as our populations, I must resolve a historical problem: why did the Europeans, and in particular those of the initial Europe of the Six, in absence of military threat, engaged in a war so contrary to their interests and whose official objective is morally dubious?

Russia, let us remember, poses *no* threat to Western Europe. A conservative power (in 2022 as in 1815), it wishes to establish an economic partnership with Europe, in particular with Germany. As I have pointed out, it was *relieved* to be rid, in 1990, of its satellite people's democracies, and particularly of Poland, its existential burden. It *knows that* it does not have the demographic and military means for expansion towards the West; the slowness of its action in Ukraine demonstrates this.

That the Russian threat is a fantasy, he was able to convince himself by observing that Donetsk, a large city in Donbass, is 100 kilometers from the Russian border, 1,000 kilometers from Moscow, 2,000 kilometers from Berlin, 3,000 kilometers from Paris, 3,200 kilometers from London, 8,400 kilometers from Washington. Russia is fighting on its border. A reading without preconceptions of the map confirms that, as its leaders assure, it is waging a defensive war against an oenitive Western world.

The official goal of Ukraine, and therefore of those who support it, is to place territories populated by Russians, in Crimea and Donbass, under the authority of the Kiev government. Why has Europe, a continent of peace, technically engaged in what historians of the future will view as a war of aggression? An aggression, it is true, of a singular kind: we do not send an army, we are content to provide equipment and money, sacrificing the Ukrainian population, military or civilian.

In the [previous chapter](#) I described a zero state of religion. Here comes to mind the hypothesis of zero morality, generated in Western Europe by the extinction of collective zombie beliefs. Neo-Kantian peace ultimately appears far removed from Kant's morality.

Europe, however, did not plunge into this war despite these absurdities and these improbabilities, by chance, by stupidity, by accident. Something pushed her. It's not all the fault of the United States. This something is its own implosion.

The European project is dead. A feeling of sociological and historical emptiness has invaded our elites and our middle classes. In this context, the Russian attack on Ukraine seemed almost like a godsend. The media editorialists also made no secret of it: Putin, through his "special military operation", gave new meaning to European construction; the EU needed an external enemy to come together and move forward. This optimistic speech betrayed a darker truth. The Union is a gas factory, unmanageable and, literally, irreparable. Its institutions are running empty; its single currency has led to irreversible internal imbalances; his reaction to the "Putin threat" does not necessarily show an effort to pull himself together but perhaps, on the contrary, a suicidal impulse: it would express the hope, unspeakable, that this endless war will, ultimately, do everything explode. After having machined a dysfunctional Maastrichtian machinery, our elites could thus discard themselves on the

Russia; their obscure desire would be for the war to rid Europe of itself. Putin would be their savior, a redeeming Satan.

The new role that the United States is currently playing in Europe, that of providing the Union with military-assisted death, is also surprising. Impoverished by forty years of neoliberalism (as we will see in [chapters 8 to 10](#)), quite ridiculous and worrying since the Trump episode, which is not over, America is no longer, in any area, a credible leader. By 1985, the German, French and Italian infant mortality rates were simultaneously lower than the American infant mortality rate. By 1993, life expectancy in these same three countries (the main nations of the original European group) exceeded that recorded in the United States. The feeling that America was in relative decline had been one of the driving forces behind Maastricht, and had aroused among Europeans a desire for autonomy, and even power.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, America has ruled by default, and also thanks to a historical technological trick. Two aspects of European suicide need to be examined in detail. First the renunciation of the German giant to power, then that of all European elites to freedom. The German case will bring us back to anthropology, that of the European elites will make us explore the mechanism of control of individuals that financial globalization has given rise to.

## ***Germany, machine society***

Everything predisposed Germany, following its reunification, then the rise of its financial power during the 2007-2008 crisis, to play the role of leader in Europe and to distinguish itself from the United States. This is the path she seemed to take in 2003 when

of the Iraq War, even though it did not dominate the Union. But in 2022 it really went to bed. Since the start of the Ukrainian war, no other country has swallowed larger snakes. The singular trajectory of this reluctant and pusillanimous hegemon demands re-examination.

We must first remember that the moral and political collapse of the most powerful nation west of the continent occurred at the same time as that of all the others. The fundamentally false idea of the Maastrichtians (and also of the anti-Maastrichtians for that matter) was to believe that Europe would lead to a surpassing of the nation by the creation of an entity of a higher order, certainly pluri-post-national, but which would have substance. Neither one nor the other understood in time that the deep sociological driving force of the project was the spontaneous dissolution of nations, in this void described by Peter Mair and other authors, and that the Europe of the euro could only be a squared-off version of what nations themselves were becoming: atomized aggregates, populated by apathetic citizens and irresponsible elites. An immense atomized aggregate.

The first European nihilism took the form of a negation of peoples and nations and, incidentally, of a dismantling of peripheral industrial apparatuses by the euro. And this, to construct a non-existent political object, and which could not exist.

This process of dissolution of nations, which led to a decomposition of the European structure as a whole, did not prevent certain nations, such as Germany, from proving more resistant than others.

German society is not individualistic. Its anthropological background is, as we have said, the family, authoritarian and unequal, which today can be described as a zombie because, if the peasant family is very far in the past, certain of its values remain, and longer than those of Protestantism or Catholicism. Despite the disappearance of the great religions and the ideologies that succeeded them, persist in Germany

mental habits of discipline, work and order. During globalization, it has therefore better preserved its industrial efficiency. Even though the ideal of the nation was disappearing everywhere, *including in Germany*, it nevertheless reorganized Eastern Europe around it. The Americans had in no way envisaged that an economic giant would reappear when they had granted it its unity and offered to the East a space for industrial expansion, the former popular democracies, passed by the grace of President Clinton from the status of satellites. ideological-political of Russia to that of economic satellites of Germany, demographic as well. For a Germany in great demographic depression, the active populations of the East, well trained educationally by communism, were a gift from History.

Germany is not nationalist, it has no power project, which is proven by its very low fertility rate of 1.5 children per woman, at most, over a long period.

Its reunification and return to the center of the continent, however, recreated the ancient geo-economic conditions of Europe. Germany found itself in a dominant position.

Attentive to the geopolitical permanence of Germany after its defeat in 1918, Jacques Bainville would have been fascinated by the Europe of 2020 <sup>2</sup>.

Supported in its being by its anthropological system, Germany, as we have said, has better resisted the death of ideologies. But the country did not emerge from the process unscathed.

This has taken a singular form: the obsession with economic efficiency for its own sake. A bit as if, deprived of conscience, German society had become a production machine. An ideology offers individuals a common destiny.

Nothing like that here. Just an obsession with industrial adaptation, which involves, among other things, compensating for demographic sluggishness with a mass of immigrants, like when you put gasoline in the tank of a car. Acceptance

of immigrants by Angela Merkel during the refugee crisis of 2015 was a continuation of the call for labor, although we cannot deny the existence of moral considerations. Why deprive yourself of the feeling of being just and good if you also do what is economically necessary?

Note, however, the indifference to ethnic origin: it is not true that Germany treated Ukrainians better than Syrians.

Our analysis of the death of ideologies, thus validated by the 2015 episode, makes it possible to demonstrate that racism is a dead form in Germany.

Low fertility should condemn the German population to decline, like that of Japan. But, on the contrary, it increased from 80.327 million inhabitants in 2011 to 84.358 million in 2022.

There were 73.985 million inhabitants of German nationality in 2011, falling to 72.034 million in 2022, a decline which includes naturalized citizens. There were 6.342 million foreigners in 2011

but 12.324 million in 2022, almost a doubling <sup>3</sup>.

In 2022, Ukrainians, Romanians, Poles, Croats and Bulgarians occupied a prominent place. The fall of the Iron Curtain effectively placed at the disposal of the German industrial economy the active populations of the former popular democracies, employed most often on site, in their own country, but sometimes also absorbed directly by the active population of the Germany.

TABLE 2

Country of origin of foreigners living in Germany in 2022	
Türkiye	1,487,110
Ukraine	1,164,200
Syria	923 805
Romania	883,670
Poland	880 780
Italy	644,970



Croatia	436 325
Bulgaria	429,665
Afghanistan	377 240
Greece	361 270
Russia	290,615
Iraq	284,595
Kosovo	280 850
In total	
European Union	4,598,602
Rest of Europe	3,895,506
Others	3,830,087

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt

**German society, obviously, is adapting and transforming. He It is likely that it stratifies and hardens. The classes averages are declining there a little faster than elsewhere in Europe, the social mobility decreases at both ends of the social pyramid a little faster too <sup>4</sup>. The Hartz reforms of 2003-2005 (under Schröder) have made the labor market more flexible and generated large population of underprivileged workers, either on time partial (often women), or unstable (often also women). I would tend to think that authoritarian values and The inequality of the original family was the driving force behind these reforms. Beyond any ideological judgment, the adaptation was, in all case, an economic success, even if the bulk of the recovery was acquired in 2001 and above all linked to the fact that the FRG had neither digest the RDA.**

**There is no reason to believe that this system is unstable, or unviable in the medium term. The very low unemployment rate in the industrial core makes it possible to integrate, at this stage, peacefully, immigration, even if the growth of the AfD, a political force cousin of the National Rally, begins to pose a issue. But a problem does not mean a lack of solution.**

**New social forms continue to appear in History.**

**During the 2000s, Germany acted more and more like a machine society, solving economic problems separately from each other, without being guided by the both symbolic and realistic notion of a true destiny. national.**

**In 2012, by inaugurating Nord Stream (construction of which had begun in 2005), it entered into a close energy partnership with Russia while counting on the United States to protect it militarily. The dereliction of the Bundeswehr, its military instrument, certainly resulted from an admirable conversion to the idea of peace, but also from the choice to make savings in active men and investments to support civilian exports. Germany therefore entered the Ukrainian war with a wasting army.**

**This combination of disorderly acts characterizes a society devoid of a global conception of what it does. A simple reading of a few American geopolitical texts would have shown German leaders that the United States would never accept their rapprochement with Russia. As Brzezinski very well explained in *Le Grand Échiquier* (1997), the strategic problem that the fall of communism posed to Washington was that the American presence on the European continent, or in Asia, was no longer justified. Eurasia could therefore have united and marginalized America. For Washington strategists, the German-Russian alliance seems like an absolute nightmare. From this perspective, the behavior of Germany, the continent's new great economic power, which simultaneously accentuated its military dependence on the United States and its energy dependence on Russia, was typical of a machine society.**

***Active nation and inert nation***

Faced with the extraordinary case of a nation supposed to no longer exist (according to the modeling of History proposed in this book as much as according to the theory of the overcoming of the nation proposed by Europe) but which continues to grow in power, I am forced at this stage to carry out a conceptual reframing. A nation is a people made aware of a collective belief and an elite who directs them according to this. However, we must not believe that when the collective belief in the nation disappears, the people disappear with it. Only his capacity for action vanishes. The people survive. Even if France no longer has elites worthy of the name, no more belief in itself, even if it has ratified the Treaty of Maastricht, abolished its sovereignty, suppressed its collective ideal, the French people continue to exist despite himself. The eclipse of France as a historical agent leaves us with the problem of French people who continue to be what they are: to hold demonstrations, riots, to refuse to let their public services fall apart and are becoming rare. The impotence of the nation as an effective historical agent allowed us to postulate, in the case of France, geopolitically, a vanished nation. The case of Germany, where the national ideal has evaporated but where something clearly continues to produce economic power, forces me to return to the idea of a complete erasure of the nation. I am therefore going to contrast the *active, conscious nation* with the *inert nation*, which outside of any awareness of itself continues on a trajectory, as if by inertia, in the physical sense of the word. Active nation, inert nation: in truth it was while discussing the case of Japan with my friend Hirohito Ohno, who was a journalist for the *Asahi shimbun* and today cultivates his garden in Azumino, that this distinction appeared to me. But Japan is like Germany, a zombie family country, and continues to exist fully in the absence of a national project, and with the same economic obsession as Germany.

Let's summarize. From the 2000s onwards, Germany ceased to be an active nation, but, at the same time, it is

became increasingly powerful in Europe as an inert nation. The root character of the anthropological background dramatized this paradox. In this system, the leader is fundamentally unhappy.

### ***The misfortune of being a chef in a native culture***

In countries with an individualist culture, such as the United States, England or France (in its central part), achieving power is not a problem but an apotheosis. The individual leader is the realized, absolute individual, happy to be leader. In a German or Japanese culture, things are different. If the general conditions allow society to operate in a harmonious manner, individuals placed at all levels of the hierarchy are secured by the presence above them of some sort of authority. All, except the leaders, who are no longer overlooked by any reassuring authority. The discomfort they feel is not too serious if the country is not very powerful: it will, in general, have an external sponsor, on an international scene where its decision-making capacity will be insignificant. Beware, on the other hand, of the leaders of countries of this type who are beginning to dominate their environment.

Let us remember that the fundamental values of the root family were authority (of the father over his sons) and inequality (of the brothers among themselves). The inequality of brothers mutates into inequality of men and peoples. Authority becomes the right to dominate weak people. Sublimated in the perception of international relations, this gives, for the head of a very powerful state: my country is superior to all the others and these others must obey. And I don't feel well myself: I have to decide alone, in the absence of a

higher control body. Finally, my country is superior to all the others, that's already it. Watch out, I said!

In the case of the community family, Russian or Chinese, authoritarianism is corrected by egalitarianism: the equality of brothers becomes equality of men and peoples. There lies the anthropological source, first of communist universalism, then of Putin's generalized sovereignism, which offers the world the vision of a multipolar world, but where each "pole", equal to the others, is authoritarian in its sphere. That Ukraine is the equal of Russia, this idea probably did not even bother the Russian leaders. It is the principle of authority which governs, in their minds, relations between Moscow and Kyiv.

Let's return to the case of a growing nation. Germany under William II was the ideal type. United, becoming the first industrial power on the continent, dominant and dominating, it then dragged Europe into its first shipwreck. The individuals who governed it, not only William II and his entourage, but beyond the German upper classes, had lost contact with reality. Its leaders then dared to defy not only France (this was traditional), but also, and simultaneously, Russia and England (to which, for good measure, they added the United States along the way), thus creating against themselves an alliance system of unprecedented power. *Deutschland über alles*.

This incapacity of the leaders of the original countries to manage power also hit Japan, leading it to attack Pearl Harbor and creating the leading economic power of the time.

The loss of *self-control* of men placed at the top of the pyramid could be described as megalomania structurally induced in the original society.

The return of Germany as the continent's dominant power foreshadowed a new phase of this kind. His interventions in favor of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, as well as the movement towards Ukraine of

the European Union that came under his leadership, and which led to Maidan in 2014, were terribly reminiscent of the geography of Nazi expansion. The Ukrainian war, however, abruptly made us observe the opposite: a resignation, a refusal even to influence events. The German elites have apparently given up immediately defending the interests of their country, one after the other: energy and economic interests in the case of relations with Russia. But the Germans are also on the verge of letting their relations with China, even more essential to their economy, deteriorate. We have the impression of observing in action, in action rather, the ruling class of a dwarf, secondary society, which refuses autonomy and which aspires to submission.

Many factors could explain this refusal to grow. Germany is a terribly aged country where the median age reaches 46 years. Perhaps this renunciation characterizes gerontocracy. Old people are hardly adventurous. Historical bad conscience could also explain it. Besieged with atonement, Germany aspires to now be on the side of good: the evidence of Russian aggression – Evil on the march, if we do not rethink – facilitates such a posture. How can we not show solidarity with little Ukraine?

But the real reason, in my opinion, is deeper, systemic. The difficulty of being a leader in a root system is aggravated in today's Germany by the absence of national consciousness, and therefore of a guiding principle of action.

From being anxious, the original leader becomes passive. When we approach Anglo-American societies, individualist and moreover historically dominant, we will note an absence of national project parallel to that of Germany, and resulting from the same void, from the same decomposition of collective forces, which will produce not passivity, but feverish activism, maneuvered by gangs rather than by party leaders structured by doctrines. Social atomization is everywhere and

determines, among the dominated, passivity, among the dominant, activism. The same principle of inertia animates all Western nations, all “inert”, deprived of soul.

However, it is not said that in the long term the choice, so to speak, of passivity is completely negative for Germany even if its short-term consequences appear catastrophic. I will have the opportunity, in the conclusion of this book, to evoke a Germany reconciled with Russia, once NATO is defeated. It is not even excluded that she will emerge victorious from this war that she is pretending to wage. Moralists could then theorize the intrinsic superiority of passivity over feverishness.

It remains to be understood why, with the exception of Viktor Orban, all European leaders since the start of the Ukrainian war have obeyed Washington, considering that the weak reluctance of Scholz and Macron has been insignificant. We must now examine the strange destiny of the European oligarchy. Well on its way to reigning autonomously, a little Germanic perhaps but independent of the oligarchy that governs the United States, it found itself brutally demoted, becoming a subordinate component of the American system. The refusal of German elites to become the continent's superior oligarchy does not explain everything.

## ***Broken autonomous oligarchic development***

Let's return to the oligarchic development of Europe in the early 2000s. It then seems almost harmonious. The accident of the Dutch and French referendums of 2005, where the “no” largely won, was quickly overcome by the Treaty of Lisbon,

which circumvents the votes, two years later. Basically, the sequence as a whole marks a strengthening of the oligarchic principle since it establishes that a referendum can be canceled without the people reacting. This is an important turning point: in two countries with a democratic and liberal tradition, the people no longer count, not simply through the fault of the "elites", but because, rendered anomic by a zero religious and ideological state, no collective action can no longer mobilize them.

Very shortly after, the crisis of 2007-2008 revealed a new hierarchy of States: Germany at the top, France as adjutant, the others at various levels, Greece at the bottom.

We could denounce the disappearance of the principle of equality between nations, and the freedom of peoples in these nations, but we could also celebrate the emergence, around 2013, of a continent that was certainly oligarchic, but which was charting an autonomous oligarchic path. . The Ukrainian war, barely ten years later, suddenly revealed that no one in Europe had any independent thought or action. The leaders of all the countries of the Union are abandoning their traditional activity, the “construction of Europe with words”, to transform themselves into robots controlled from outside, like in a science-action film.

A radical hypothesis can explain this robotization. Europe, simultaneously oligarchic and anomic, has been overtaken and invaded by the underground mechanisms of financial globalization – which is not a blind, impersonal force, but a phenomenon directed and controlled by the United States. The examination of the monetary field and the circulation of capital will provide us with an unexpected explanatory key.

***Understanding the problems of the rich***



In an oligarchic system, economic as well as political, wealth accumulates at the top of the social structure. This wealth has to go somewhere. This is a distressing question for its holder, who too, we too often forget, has his problems: how to protect his money and make it “work”? I would like to thank Peter Thiel (co-founder of PayPal), who, during a rich and fascinating discussion, particularly on the American elites, made me understand the point of view of people who really have money.

One of the fundamental phenomena of recent decades has been the extension of the dollar as a refuge currency and of tax havens, under American control, as places of refuge for European assets. The emergence of the dollar as a currency used internationally, outside the American territory, dates back to the 1960s and owes much to the dissolution of the British Empire. Oliver Bullough wrote two works particularly

illuminating on the question: *Moneyland* and *Butler to the* <sup>5</sup>. We *World* discover the driving role played by the City of London and the confetti of the British Empire, in offering the dollar a freer, more cheerful life, outside the sphere of direct control of the American tax administration. The Bank of England began by authorizing banks established in the City to use the dollar as their currency and to grant loans in this currency.

At first perplexed, the American authorities quickly understood the benefit they could derive from it: the American Treasury certainly lost its exclusive and direct control but the sphere of action of the United States expanded. At the end of the 1960s, more than a hundred branches of foreign banks operated in the City. The so-called “Euro-dollar” was born, but it is in fact a “world currency” dollar. The currency of the American State becomes the reserve and speculation instrument of all the rich people on the planet, and the American State, in fact, the State of all the rich people in the world. I deliberately force the line, once again transforming a trend into a completed structure.

The creation of the euro only temporarily slowed this trend. One of the effects of the 2007-2008 crisis was that people who really had money lost confidence in the single currency. Between June 2008 and February 2022 (start of the Ukrainian war), the euro saw its value erode by 25% compared to that of the dollar. The truly rich therefore preferred to hoard in dollars rather than euros. Causality is circular since the conversion of the assets of the rich into dollars supports the value of the dollar.

The tax havens played an essential role in setting the mechanism in motion. The most recent list of “non-cooperative countries and territories at any scale”, published on February 21, 2023 in the *Official Journal* of the EU, is informative. There is, of course, the Russian Federation, but, for the rest, only entities subject to varying degrees to the United States: – Directly, such as the United States Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa.

- A little less directly, like Palau and the Marshall Islands.
  - Via Great Britain or its former colonies, such as the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa.
  - As for Costa Rica and Panama, although not formally American, they are also in the hands of the United States.
- United.

The development of the system, as we see, owes a lot to the United Kingdom and its more or less emancipated dependencies. However, final control is very American. England saved its financial system but in this way it enslaved itself to the United States.

With the creation of shell companies embedded in each other, tax havens have made it possible to create, as Oliver Bullough describes in *Moneyland*, a world that is certainly invisible but a significant part of the real world. Gabriel Zucman, in his remarkable 2017 book, *The Hidden Wealth of Nations. Investigation*

*on tax havens*, estimates that 11% of the financial assets of European households are placed in tax havens, however, <sup>6</sup>. Zucman repeats the old antiphon which consists of implicitly denouncing Switzerland where, traditionally, rich Europeans “hid their money”, to put it elegantly (let us also mention the annexes of Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Monaco) . Bringing Switzerland into line is most often considered a victory of morality over financial capitalism “in general”. The reader of Marx and Lenin, who thinks in terms of socially organized groups and state instruments, will see things somewhat differently.

A very beautiful diagram in Zucman's book (p. 33) shows that from the 1980s the investment in Switzerland of the money of rich Europeans stagnated then decreased slightly, while it flew away into the tax havens of the rest of the world. These are under the eye of the Americans. Switzerland, when it was the tax paradise of rich

Europeans, certainly presented a problem to various left-wing governments throughout Europe. It still ensured the independence of our oligarchies from the United States. A convinced but realistic Europeanist, resigned to the oligarchic nature of the Union, should campaign to protect or, better, rehabilitate Switzerland as a fiscal paradise, rather than help the Americans put pressure on the Confederation's banks so that They reveal their secrets, if any remain. In no way should he be happy to see the Swiss pay fines to the Federal Reserve (Fed) for actions which are trivial if we compare them to those of the American financial institutions, responsible for the Great Recession (before being revived by the federal state without their leaders being sanctioned)

<sup>7</sup>. It is clear that, from the American point of view, breaking up Switzerland was essential to holding down the European oligarchies.

If 60% of the money of rich Europeans (proportion given by Zucman) grows under the benevolent eye of authorities

upper classes located in the United States, we can consider that the European upper classes have lost their mental and strategic autonomy. But the worst, their surveillance by the NSA, was yet to come.

The Internet has turned our lives upside down, including those of the oligarchs. In 1999, 15% of Europeans used the Internet, in 2003 it was 42%, and in 2021 87%. Everyone today uses the Internet. However, we must make the historical hypothesis not only that the operation of financial mechanisms has accelerated thanks to the Internet, but that their very nature has been transformed. Whereas in the past the privileged tried, modestly, to evade taxes, they have now entered into a magical system of entirely computerized speculation.

Money is no longer just safe, it *works*.

### ***Under the eye of the NSA***

Thanks to its instantaneous travels between Anglo-American tax havens, the money once wisely hidden in Switzerland is now making money. He was immobile, he became active, participating in the great speculative *esta* that globalization has become in its final phase. Also sometimes coming from Switzerland, often via Luxembourg, it moves further and further away from real production and contributes to derealizing the economy, thus leading the West to defeat. We will see how, in more detail in [Chapter 9](#), which deals with the disintegration of the American real economy.

However, let us move forward on the question of the loss of autonomy of the European upper classes. The Internet first embodied a dream of freedom, then a darker reality; it initially aroused an exhilarating feeling: freedom to meet people to whom one would never have been able to speak before,

freedom of circulation of information, freedom to send photos from one end of the planet to the other, freedom from pornography, freedom to book your train ticket and hotel on impulse, to examine everything instant his bank account, to circulate his money. Secondly, we realized that the Internet is also *the recording of everything*, absolutely everything we do there, and the possibility of putting all actions, present and past, under surveillance, financial and sexual, which take place there.

I don't think that the rich who started depositing their money in the Anglo-Saxon tax havens understood right away that they were placing themselves under the eye and control of the American authorities. Awareness certainly began when the actions of the National Security Agency (NSA), as old as the CIA, but which, before the Internet, did not have such importance, were revealed. The NSA has specialized in recording communications, building, for example, a monumental *data center* in Utah for more than \$3 billion.

When we think of America's power of control, the first idea that comes to mind is that of a world policeman, intervening in small countries like Iraq or the Central American states: poor countries, the dominated. The conspirator from the Millevaches plateau, this dominated other, perhaps imagines that he too is being monitored by the CIA. We neglect the essential: the surveillance exercised by the NSA on the oligarchies of the world, particularly outside the United States. We don't think about it because they are privileged people.

*No Place to Hide* by Glenn Greenwald is on this crucial point essential reading for any journalist who made <sup>8</sup>. Greenwald is the public the information provided by Edward Snowden, a computer scientist at the CIA and then the NSA, who became a symbol of political freedom. Snowden revealed, in 2013, the large-scale espionage program developed by the

American government. He took refuge in Russia, and I think the asylum granted to Snowden is one of the things that the Americans have not forgiven Putin for.

If the CIA is dedicated to global balances, to action in the Middle East or elsewhere, it clearly appears in Greenwald's work that the NSA primarily targets, not the enemies of the United States, but its allies: Europeans, Japanese, Koreans, Latin Americans. The revelation that Angela Merkel's cell phone was tapped began to alert public opinion. Reading Greenwald's book, we become aware that the American Empire is not an abstraction and that it does not only result from the will of consenting democrats: it is based on very concrete mechanisms for surveillance of individuals.

A new geography of the West is emerging, as seen from Washington. The United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are annexes (the *Five Eyes*). Western Europe is a second Latin America, where American domination, although recent, is much older. My friend Philippe Chapelin, a great connoisseur of Latin America, alerted me to the evolution of European elites towards a Latin American type of submission, with the difference that the left intelligentsia remained independent of the United States in Latin America, which is not the case in Europe.

The NSA only has 30,000 direct employees but it subcontracts part of its activities to private companies which have 60,000 employees. The members of the "Intelligence *Community*", which brings together eighteen intelligence agencies, are generally estimated to number around a hundred thousand. In fact, they only constitute the core of a much larger nebula of control: 300,000 people seem to me, on a pifometer, to be a reasonable estimate of the order of magnitude of <sup>9</sup>. If the citizens of Europe, and in particular of France, do not know where their leaders' money is, the NSA knows it and these leaders know that it knows it.

In all honesty, I can't really say to what extent the data collected by the NSA helps hold Western elites in check. I also do not know to what extent this institution can actually achieve private accounting, nor what its storage capacities are. But he knew that the European elites believed in his power and felt monitored to be very cautious in their relations with the American master. Many people have done anything wrong in the seemingly emancipatory phase of the Internet, during which the West

saw the proliferation of Benjamin Griveaux <sup>10</sup>.

nanciers It is with regret that I include fear in my explanation of European servility towards the United States. It is not the only alignment factor; but this absolutely watertight system of power, with an obedience rate close to 100%, makes us think that a totalitarian atmosphere must reign in the upper echelons. Vladimir Putin may be ironic in suggesting that if the United States asked European leaders to hang themselves, it would do so, but would beg for it to be with ropes made at home.

them <sup>11</sup> ; and to specify that this petition would be rejected to protect the interests of the American textile industry. Extreme obedience, extreme explanation.

## ***Decline of America but increase in its influence over Europe***

These financial control mechanisms were not intended, they were introduced as if by surprise: the Internet, as I said, was perceived first as an instrument of freedom, before we understood that it was also an instrument of surveillance like never before existed. Europe's upper classes

oligarchic under construction have been seduced by financial globalization and trapped by the universal recording of data.

If the initial American take on its European (and Asian) protectorates dates from 1945, the Internet has enormously strengthened it. We can actually see that since the mid-2000s, American control of Western Europe has increased. We must emphasize here the gap between the respective perceptions of the United States by Europeans and by the rest of the world. It is obvious, in the eyes of non-Europeans, that the power of the United States is declining, and quickly: American industrial production, which represented 45% of world production in 1945, now represents only 17%. And this 17%, as we will see in [Chapter 9](#), is not completely real. For the [Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs](#), Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, as he explained in detail in *The India Way*, it goes without saying that the weight of the United States is constantly decreasing within a

world which is developing and diversifying, [12](#). The Indians see moreover, the retraction of the American Empire as the logical continuation of that of the British Empire, which they witnessed from the front row. This feeling of Indians is found everywhere: in Iran, in Saudi Arabia, in China, in Thailand...

Everywhere except Europe. The Europeans seem to be the only ones, perhaps with the Japanese and the Koreans, to perceive a strengthening NATO and an increasingly indispensable America. But this is because, as the American system shrinks throughout the world, it weighs more and more on its initial protectorates, which remain its ultimate bases of power.

We are here beyond the Brzezinski doctrine – rather below it. It is no longer really a question of the United States dominating the world. It is the control of Europe and Far East Asia that has become vital, because in its current weakened state the United States needs its industrial capabilities. It is striking how much cutting-edge technological activity has flowed to the periphery of the Empire. Electronic chips are



made in Taiwan, Korea or Japan. What remains of industrial activities is found in Japan, Korea, Germany and Eastern Europe.

If we delve into NATO's unconscious, we observe that its military, ideological and psychological mechanics no longer exist to protect Western Europe, but to control it.

Considered in its overall productive and commercial structure, the West is not symmetrical. We see the emergence of a relationship of systemic exploitation of the periphery by the American center. The deficit in the United States' trade balance (in goods and services) with the European Union was in 2021, on the eve of the war, \$220 billion. If we add the 40 billion from Switzerland, the 60 from Japan, the 30 from Korea and the 40 from Taiwan, and taking into account the surplus of 0.4 billion against Norway, we obtain an American deficit of 393 billion dollars vis-à-vis its allies (protectorates and colonies), more than the 350 billion vis-à-vis China, it is true weakened in 2021 at the end of the Covid years.

The Americanosphere, the heart of the Empire, is less unbalanced. Canada, of course, has a surplus of 50 billion against the United States, but it is not certain that its proximity does not make it an “internal” component of the American economy. The United States, extraordinary, has a surplus of 5 billion against the United Kingdom and 14 billion against Australia. New Zealand has a surplus of 1 billion against the United States.

It is therefore time to turn our attention to Great Britain, a nation not simply inert but in distress; the anti-Russian hysteria of the British will then lose its mysterious character.

1. Nicholas Mulder, *The Economic Weapon. The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War*, Yale University Press, 2022.

2. Jacques Bainville, *The Political Consequences of Peace*, Gallimard, coll. “Tel”, 2002.

**3. Source: Statistisches Bundesamt.**

**4. OECD, *Is the German Middle-Class Crumbling? Risks and Opportunities*, 2021.**

**5. Oliver Bullough, *Moneyland. Why Thieves and Crooks Now Rule the World and how to Take it Back*, London, Prole Books, 2018; *Butler to the World. How Britain Became the Servant of Tycoons, Tax Dodgers, Kleptocrats and Criminals*, London, Prole Books, 2022.**

**6. Gabriel Zucman, *The Hidden Wealth of Nations. Survey on tax havens*, Seuil, 2017.**

**7. UBS was thus ordered in July 2023 to pay \$387 million. See the article dated July 24, 2023, signed by Samantha Delouya, on the CNN website: "UBS Hit with \$387 Million in Fines for "Misconduct" by Credit Suisse in Archegos Dealings".**

**8. Glenn Greenwald, *No Place to Hide. Edward Snowden, the NSA and the US Surveillance State*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2014; transl. Fr. *Nowhere to hide. The Snowden story by the man who revealed it to the world*, JC Lattès, 2014.**

**9. My estimate will seem methodologically slight but this is how I proceeded to evaluate the KGB's burden on the Soviet economy in *The Final Fall*, *op. cit.***

**10. Benjamin Griveaux: socialist politician then Macronist, whose political career was shattered in 2020 by the revelation of personal videos of a sexual nature. Naivety regarding the Internet is the important element in this story which is in itself insignificant.**

**11. TASS, mid-July 2023.**

**12. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, *The India Way. Strategies for an Uncertain World*, Gurugram, HarperCollins India, 2020.**

## CHAPTER 6

### ***In Britain: towards nation zero (Crumble Britannia)***

British warmongering is both sad and comical. The daily proclamations of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) give us the impression of reliving, in a parodic mode, the Battle of Britain or that of the Atlantic. The British Empire was then fighting, on a global scale, for civilization. Today, the British army would not even be capable, like the French army, of carrying out operations in Africa and making itself hated there. The UK does not actually have a nuclear weapon as it is dependent on the US for its maintenance and it is not at all clear that it could use it without their permission. The almost cinematic megalomania of the MoD parachutes us somewhere between James Bond and OSS 117 – with the difference that James Bond rather seeks to ease the conflict with Russia, while OSS 117, despite its stupidity, accomplishes the absurd mission. given to him by the French services.

The British vociferations perplexed the Americans themselves, who did not expect so much. The usual followership would have known, like Blair engaging with Bush in the second war

from Iraq. The tragic downside of this nonsense: if they do not have much material to send, the British still, at each stage, push for an intensification of the war. When, after the first Russian offensive, Zelensky seemed ready to discuss with Putin, Boris Johnson was one of those who convinced him not to negotiate, locking him forever into his warrior role. The British were the first to send Challenger 2 heavy tanks, long-range Storm Shadow missiles, depleted uranium munitions. All in insignificant quantities (fourteen tanks) but to set an example for the French who followed up with the twin of the Storm Shadow, the Scalp, and especially for the Germans who delivered, or promised to do so, Leopard 1 and 2 tanks in greater numbers. We then discovered that Germany excelled in the export of not only civil but also military vehicles, since the Leopard 2 was sold, new or used, to the Netherlands, Norway, Canada, Greece, Hungary, Finland, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Qatar, Singapore, Chile and Indonesia . By the end of summer 2023, Ukraine had received fourteen from Poland, eight from Canada, eight from Norway, six from Spain and thirty-six were

“under delivery” from Germany European equipment, <sup>1</sup>. All the overall quantity of which remains unimpressive, seems to have been used (and worn out?) during the Ukrainian counter-offensive in the summer of 2023. The United States followed the United Kingdom for sending depleted uranium munitions, although, as their stocks of conventional munitions were running out, they were the only ones to ship cluster bombs to the Ukrainians. We were waiting on the front for the arrival of the American Abrams tank, deprived of its most effective armor (the secret of which must not fall into the hands of the Russians), while at least two Challengers have already ambled across the plains of Ukraine.

## ***The Truss moment***

English warmongering is sometimes interpreted as a reaction to Brexit. This, in fact, did not prove to be a great economic success and it would therefore have aroused, among the British, a fear of isolation and the need to join their European partners, through this diplomatic and pseudo-activism. military.

Such an interpretation is not without meaning but falls well short of reality. We must first return to the meaning of Brexit.

I must here confess the error I made in my initial analysis of this event. Along with many others, I saw the resurgence of a national identity, at least in England since Scotland voted to remain in the EU. Brexit actually resulted from an implosion of the British nation. This hypothesis also accounts for the separation, on this problem, of England and Scotland, whose Union, in 1707, gave birth to the British nation, largely on the basis of a common Protestant identity, as shown by Linda

Collie <sup>2</sup>.

Let's go further in my confession. I had remained imbued with the traditional vision of a pragmatic, reasonable, enduring England, and I had even managed to forget that it had been a major actor in the neoliberal revolution and that, despite strong domestic opposition, it had participated in the Second Iraq War.

I owe Liz Truss an enlightenment. His first speech as Prime Minister, on September 6, 2022, in front of 10 Downing Street, caused me a cognitive shock: his restless and vain middle-class demeanor was so un-British! There followed a cascade of surprising information that my liberated brain, thanks to it, ended up accepting. The

*Guardian* marveled that the four most senior members of Liz Truss' government

were neither men nor white. The Prime Minister was a white woman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kwasi Kwarteng, was of Ghanaian origin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, James Cleverly, had a British father but his mother came from Sierra Leone, the Minister of the Interior, Suella Braverman, was of Indian origin. The contrast was striking with a French government in which the majority of important ministers, even if they sometimes have a North African grandparent, have good provincial petty bourgeois faces, from Macron to Le Maire via Borne. (I should point out, so as not to cause any misunderstanding, that I myself feel physically closer to my fellow citizens of North African origin than to our leaders.)

Recent developments in Britain mark, in fact, a stunning colorization of politics at the highest level. Let us take the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, the second person in government, more prestigious in the United Kingdom than is the Minister of the Economy and Finance in France. The list of Chancellors of the Exchequer can be traced back to the distant Middle Ages. The Chancellor occupies 11 Downing Street (adjoining 10). People from “ethnic minorities” have succeeded one another in this position in recent years: in July 2019, Sajid Javid, of Pakistani origin, followed in February 2020 by Rishi Sunak, the current Prime Minister, of Indian origin, then of Nadhim Zahawi, in July 2022, of Kurdish origin, who was succeeded, in September 2022, by Kwasi Kwarteng, already mentioned. It was only with Jeremy Hunt, in October 2022, that the function returned to a “White”, as they say there.

All this in an atmosphere of economic madness. Kwasi Kwarteng had concocted, with Liz Truss, an extraordinary policy of reducing taxes without financing in return. Result: markets in panic and a Bank of England only slightly less aloof. Truss and Kwarteng had forgotten that the pound, unlike the dollar, is not the world's reserve currency that allows the state to do anything.

The “colored” personalities of the Conservative Party are real conservatives, real “Tories”, and they have distinguished themselves by their radicalism in the area of maintaining order as much as by their neoliberalism. Let’s think of Priti Patel, Minister of the Interior, of Indian origin, so tough that she almost makes us feel tenderness for Gérald Darmanin.

Another “colored” personality, Humza Yousaf, Prime Minister of Scotland and president of the Scottish National Party (SNP), of Pakistani origin. Let us finally add another star, less directly political but with an inexhaustible Russophobia: the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan (son of a Pakistani dermatologist and a British nurse), the very one who issued a mandate arrest against Vladimir Putin and is now, reciprocally, included on the list of people wanted in Russia. This same Karim Kahn has a brother, Imran Ahmad Khan, one of the conservative elected officials who brought down the Red Wall, that is to say the Labor fortress deemed impregnable in the north of England. His elected career, however, was brief.

First glorified (against his will) as the first simultaneously Tory, gay and colored MP, he was then prosecuted for sexual abuse of a 15-year-old minor. To make matters worse, he did half of his higher education in... Russia. I do not mention these individuals and these events to compete with *Here* or *Gala* but to make the French (or non-British) reader feel that the United Kingdom is a world in itself and that more fascinating phenomena are happening. even as Russophobia.

Rishi Sunak seems more reasonable. He did not participate, for example, in the drafting of the neoliberal firebrand which announced in 2012 the crazy economic plan of 2022, signed by Kwasi Kwarteng, Priti Patel, Dominic Raab, Chris Skidmore and Liz Truss, *Britannia unchained*<sup>3</sup>. Once appointed Prime Minister, he simply took the oath on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the sacred part of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*. His wife, a billionaire (through her father),

Indian, does not have British nationality (a first!) and, a few years ago, she attracted the attention of the sc.

So far I have only cited members of the Conservative Party, currently in power, but the majority of “colored” MPs belong to the Labor Party. Let us just think of the mayor of London, Sadiq Kahn, of Pakistani origin.

This development is in a sense admirable, but we must understand its sociological and historical significance. England was a "white" Protestant country, whose ruling class was white and Protestant, a nation born out of its opposition to Catholicism and which had founded its empire with the tacit belief that "white" (and of course Protestant) people were superior. We can simultaneously rejoice that British racism has disappeared (like German racism) and wonder what the historical object called the United Kingdom is now that it is no longer ruled exclusively by white Protestants. I will ask the same question about the United States.

## ***Tribute to Ionesco: inventory of British dysfunctions***

Ethnic minorities, “BAME”, for “Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic”, make up only 7.5% of the population

British but it is clear that, symbolically, they represent more within the political class. To measure their place in British society in more depth, let's look at higher education, which largely contributes to undermining the middle class in advanced societies.

We will hardly move away from politics. Time is no more, in the United Kingdom (as elsewhere in the former democracies



liberals), where workers sat in Parliament. A higher education diploma, however degraded, is now required to enter politics.

In 2019, the probability of a young white Englishman accessing higher education was 33%, that of blacks 49%, that of “Asians” 55%. And, within these “Asians”, which mainly include people of Indian or Pakistani origin, the probability for people of Chinese origin

amounted to 72%<sup>5</sup>. We can largely attribute the advantage of Indians or Chinese to vertical family structures (community but which reserve a special place for the eldest) as well as to Sikh or Confucian traditions of respect for education. The absolute nuclear family of white Englishmen does not supervise its offspring as effectively, and today's zero Protestantism no longer conveys, by definition, the educational potential of active or zombie Protestantism. But blacks also have more chances of obtaining higher education than whites. However, neither African or West Indian family structures, nor the religious, Christian, animist or voodoo traditions that overlap with them particularly favor education.

Here we are confronted with a deviation of anthropological and religious forces by a mysterious factor. We can demonstrate the anomaly by identifying a decorrelation: everywhere in the world, educational performance is correlated with performance in terms of infant mortality. The lower the infant mortality, the higher the educational performance. In England, infant mortality among whites is 3 per 1,000 and among blacks 6.4. This decorrelation of educational performance and medical performance is a sociological anomaly. It shows that BAME people benefit from positive discrimination in education and sometimes in politics.

I pass without transition to poverty to make clear the feeling of deprivation which reigns almost everywhere in this country which

fantasy about war. The *Guardian* of May 18, 2022 told us, for example, that the police had been instructed to treat with discernment (to let go?) people (old ladies?) caught stealing from supermarkets because they are hungry. We find here, all the same, the humanity of traditional England, but which must administer the destruction of its productive base by the neoliberal revolution.

Return to postmodern savagery. An agreement concluded the same month with Rwanda provided for the deportation of illegal immigrants there. The United Kingdom Court of Appeal ruled that the deportation was unlawful. I can't imagine the Supreme Court validating this far-fetched project.

The principle of deportation itself is a bit harsh. But if the destination is a country where a genocide took place, that's too much. When the Bundestag denied *the Holodomor*, the great Ukrainian famine, as a genocide, I was surprised that Germany lacked a sense of humor to the point of claiming, through its elected officials, to teach us learnedly about this what is genocide. But if the British government is trying to make Rwanda a place of deportation, I wonder if the state zero of religion and ideology has not also given birth – in England! – from a zero state of sense of humor. Above all, we feel a zero morality proliferating to which we could also attribute the delivery of depleted uranium munitions to Ukraine.

The fate of Julian Assange in London raises the question of what margin of freedom the United Kingdom retains in the American system; and if, in this zero state of so many things, freedom of information and expression, so dear to political culture

English, still has some chance of survival. After taking refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy between 2012 and 2019, Assange was imprisoned by the British state following extradition proceedings launched by the United States on charges of “espionage”.

On April 20, 2022, British justice authorized his extradition to the United States; the British Home Secretary must sign

the order. Julian Assange's lawyers have appealed the high court's decision...

I wonder to what extent the Ukrainian war interferes with these events. The link is necessarily close since the effective extradition of Julian Assange would, so to speak, officially sign the end of the independence of the United Kingdom and would confer on it, no less officially, the status of satellite of America. Putin, protector of Snowden's freedom, would then, I am sure, not fail to give us a demonstration of Russian humor.

I repeat it forcefully: I do not write these lines to be outraged but because, as a historian, I seek to understand the nature of current British society.

Let us continue the Ionesco inventory of its dysfunctions. In the statistics of the National Health Service (NHS), post-war pride of the nation, symbol of the social state (social state and active nation, it is all one), we discover that in 2021, among the new doctors registered in the UK, only 37% were British, 13% from the EU and 50% from the rest of the world, mainly India and Pakistan. But what is this nation that is no longer capable of training its own doctors to care for its citizens?

This impoverishment is beginning to weigh on the biological state of the population. Let us quote the *Guardian* again, as rich in information as it is inept in its hawkish posture (common to almost the entire British press, no difference here with France):

British children who grew up during the years of austerity are falling far behind many of their European peers. In 1985, boys and

The British ranked 69<sup>e</sup> rank out of 200 countries for average height at age

5 years old. But in 2019, boys were ranked 102<sup>e</sup> and girls were 96<sup>e</sup>. The<sup>e</sup>. The size average height of a 5-year-old boy was 112.5 cm and that of a girl was 111.7 cm.

In the Netherlands, the average height of a 5-year-old boy is 119.6 cm and that of a girl is 118.4 cm. In France, the chires are 114.7 cm and 113.6 cm respectively. In Germany they are 114.8 and 113.3. Danish boys are on average 117.4 cm tall and Danish girls are 118.1 cm (*sic*).

According to experts, a poor diet and budget cuts in the health system are to blame for this phenomenon. But they also emphasized that height is an important indicator of overall living conditions, including

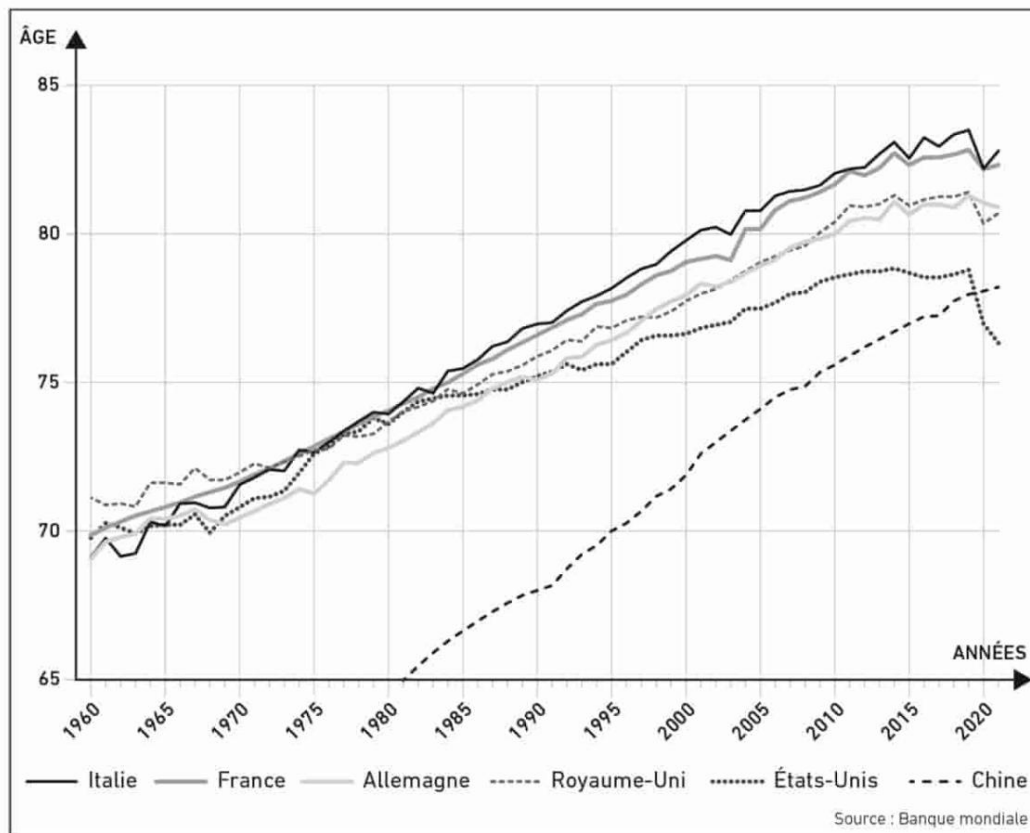
illnesses and infections, stress, poverty and quality of sleep .

Let us continue this overview of British disarray with a look at the economic situation of the middle classes; let's put ourselves in the place of an English academic: his salary is blocked, his pension will be reduced by 30%, he suffered an inflation even higher than 6% during the summer of 2023 while the interest rate of his mortgage continues to rise due to the monetary policy of the Bank of England. Proletarianization threatens.

The life expectancy curve (graph 6.1) shows that while only the United States recorded a spectacular decline between 2015 and 2020, the United Kingdom, from the 1980s (the Thatcher years), suffered a significant slowdown. Progress there then becomes slower than in France or Italy, slower even than in Germany, disrupted from 1990 by reunification. The chronology of the demographic movement therefore requires us to examine the practical consequences of neoliberalism.

## ***Economic disintegration***

**Figure 6.1**  
**LIFE EXPECTANCY SINCE 1960 IN THE WEST AND CHINA**



**Margaret Thatcher was not a minor partner of Reagan, nor Tony Blair a pale copy of Bill Clinton. The neoliberal transformation of the United Kingdom has been no less significant than that experienced in the United States. Of course, the British remain, in many ways, European. Income inequality across the Channel is not comparable to that in the United States; violence through homicide remains low, at European level. But in other areas, the United Kingdom has gone marginally further than the giant across the Atlantic. Above all, and quite simply because of its small size and weak power, neoliberalism has put it in a much more perilous situation; he does not have the**

and the strategic depth of a country-continent. Its urban fabric does not have, unlike that of the United States, fifteen cities with more than 5 million inhabitants but only one, London, whose area brings together 10 million people, that is to say 15%. Population. The capital alone polarizes society in a dangerous way. France is also polarized and the Paris metropolitan area weighs even more heavily, with almost 16% of the country's population. But the supercric twice

upper France (France: 551,695 km<sup>2</sup>, United Kingdom : 243,610 km<sup>2</sup>) gives more cultural autonomy to cities located

outside the Paris Basin. England alone, with 130,279 km<sup>2</sup>, East barely larger than the Paris Basin, estimated at To the socio-economic 110,000 km<sup>2</sup>. concentration of which London is the seat is added, since the exhaustion of the oil reserves of the Sea of North, the absence of natural resources.

British deindustrialization has been a little more pronounced than that of other major countries in the Western world. If, in France and the United States, industrial workers represented only 19% of the active population in 2021, it was only 18% in the United Kingdom. By comparison, Germany is at 28%, Italy at 27% and Japan at 24%. Britain went so far as to sacrifice its ability to design ordinary automobiles. They are still built in the country, but they are no longer British. Above all, the United Kingdom is the country where the nancialization of the economy has been maximum, even more extensive than in the United States. Across the Atlantic, the financial industry (as they elegantly say to hide the fact that it produces almost nothing) represents 7.8% of GDP; but in the UK it's 8.3%. Finally, what makes it possible to argue that the British economic situation is the most adventurous is the fact, mentioned at the end of the [previous chapter](#), that the United Kingdom manages to be in

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trade deficit with the United States, themselves being so with the most countries in the world<sup>8</sup> .

It is ideology, neoliberal of course, that Britain owes to having become vulnerable. We have privatized to the point of absurdity; railroads and water supplies, sectors that economists call natural monopolies, have been ruthlessly sold off, deregulated, paralyzed, worst of all, fired

in their fragmented form of the 19th<sup>e</sup> century. We resorted century systematically to *outsourcing*, externalization, by which tasks which are the responsibility of the State are entrusted to private companies. The Conservatives had introduced this practice, but Tony Blair eagerly converted to it in 1997. "Under the Labor regime, public services worth billions of pounds were outsourced: the private sector runs prisons; local authorities outsource extensively, from housing benefits and tax services to street cleaning and schools. The administration's major IT contracts are devoted, almost exclusively, to the private sector. Charities manage a large part of the social services intended

for the elderly and the disabled<sup>9</sup> . »

## ***Behind economic disintegration, religious disintegration***

But it was not possible to attribute responsibility to neoliberalism. At the conscious level of the actors, political or not, there was of course an economic doctrine which dreamed of a pure and perfect market and a withdrawal of the State on its functions of maintaining order and war. It is the doctrinaire neo-liberalism of Margaret Thatcher, a personally honest woman, that I am describing. But strength is

to note that, applied, this doctrine has destroyed public services, industry and living conditions. The first liberals, as Karl Polanyi showed so well, had built the market; neoliberals are destroying the economy. It's very different.

Let us start, once again, from the postulate that the actors are sincere. It is obvious that privatization, outsourcing and tax cuts cannot address the simple fact that, like the United States, the United Kingdom trains too few engineers – 8.9% of students compared to 7.2% in the United States, 24.2% in Germany and 23.4% in Russia around 2020 – and that this deficiency condemns to failure any policy that does not make the training of engineers a priority. To understand how such an enormous intellectual error could have prevailed, it is necessary to go below the conscious level. He knew how to get rid of words, which organize the conscious, to observe the facts, which here are the unconscious in action. The neoliberal conceptual revolution then appears as the simple liberation of an instinct for acquisition dissociated from all morality. The word that comes to mind is “greed.” We can make money by selling off state assets and holding citizens to ransom through outsourcing. It is normal that this greedy unconscious is more fully released among Labor, whose consciousness is social. It is undoubtedly Tony Blair who best embodies, in an ostensible way, the notion of unconscious greed: since he is no longer Prime Minister, he has been busy making money, a lot of money. money.

Neoliberalism wanted to found a non-Weberian capitalism, whose “spirit” would be freed from Protestant ethics. Beyond its intellectual simplism, the neoliberal revolution betrays moral deficiency.

I won't stop there. Greed is only one aspect of the neoliberal experiment. Wanting to work less to earn more may not be very moral, but this inclination is not devoid of common sense. On the other hand, the brink of destruction – of factories, professions, individual existences – that we have



The fact that it is spreading suggests that there is an instinct for destruction also hidden behind economic theory. We have been repeatedly told about Schumpeterian “creative destruction”. But what we are truly observing, in the economy and in society, is destruction itself: the word “nihilism” comes back to haunt us.

Let us remember Margaret Thatcher's best-known phrase: "*There is no such thing as society*", often cited, with good reason, because it is so central. I find it hard to see Margaret Thatcher as a philosopher.

major policy of the beginning<sup>e</sup> of the 20th century. Yet this sentence, so extraordinary in its radicality, reveals to us a hidden truth of neoliberalism: its pure and simple negation of reality. Unless she expresses a wish: the destruction of that whose existence we deny, society.

It is not in the old debates of economists, for example between Milton Friedman and his Keynesian opponents, that we will find the causes of this nihilism, of the disappearance of social morality, but on the side of religion, active, zombie or zero.

It is time to apply to Great Britain the hypothesis of a final collapse of Protestantism. The religious void is the ultimate truth of neoliberalism.

## ***What Protestantism was***

Let us first recall the values of Protestantism, which are not necessarily very familiar to nationals of a Catholic-Republican country like France. Protestantism is distinguished first of all by the individual's diving into himself under the pretext of dialoguing with God. It therefore implies a degree of internalization almost unknown until its advent. But,

at the same time – what we are less aware of in France leads to a strengthening of collective consciousness. The “internalized” individual is also monitored by the community with a precision also unprecedented until then in European history. Max Weber gave us a very beautiful summary of the relationship between the individual and the group in early Protestantism:

But it is important to underline a too-forgotten fact: the Reformation certainly did not signify the elimination of the domination of the Church in everyday life, it rather constituted the substitution of a new form of *domination* for the old one. . It signified the replacement of an extremely lax authority, practically non-existent at the time, by another which penetrated all areas of public or private life, imposing extremely heavy and severe regulations on conduct. [...]

The authority of Calvinism, as it prevailed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Geneva and Scotland, the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in most of the countries

Low, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in New England and for a time in England, would represent for us the most absolutely unbearable form of control

[10](#)  
ecclesiastical on the individual.

Protestantism, as we see, contains elements that are both very strong and very contradictory, which we will find in its other aspects.

It demands that the masses be literate because the faithful must all have access to the Scriptures. This, I said, is what explains the advance of the reformed countries not only in terms of education but also in terms of economic take-off. The crucial factor in the rise of the West was Protestantism's commitment to literacy.

Furthermore, professing that each deity is himself a priest, Protestantism denotes an egalitarian-democratic component. On a deeper level, however, we find the opposite: predestination. Some are chosen and others damned, a conviction well established by Luther, radicalized by Calvin. Although it has been attenuated in the Netherlands, England and the United States,

United by Arminianism and the reintroduction of free will, Protestantism never returned to the initial Christian notion that, on a metaphysical level, all men are equal. The range of possibilities goes from saying that they are not, to feeling that this equality is open to doubt.

Let's finish our review of the main characteristics of Protestantism. It's a work ethic: we are not on earth to laugh, but to work and save. Here we are at the antipodes of the consumer society.

Protestantism was also long synonymous with sexual puritanism.

Protestant countries had this in common and all were economically successful. Without exception. Whether we take Switzerland, with its Protestant core, the Netherlands with its Protestant center, the Scandinavian countries, Protestant Germany, England, the United States or the peripheries of England which are Australia, New Zealand and Canada. All have prospered while not sharing the same family structures. Germany, as I said, is very authoritarian, England very liberal.

Protestantism has undergone variations. While half of Catholicism was disappearing in the Paris Basin, around 1730-1740, to be replaced by the Revolution and the Republic, English and American Protestantism was going through a phase of weakness, with the development, among the educated superiors of the time, of a certain indifference. Max Weber was thus able to deny Benjamin Franklin as a deist. As he describes him, I would gladly see in him a typical zombie Protestant, who no longer practices his religion but retains its ethics, attached to the values of honesty, work, seriousness, and always aware that man only has a limited amount of time.

Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson can also be considered deists, in this moment of decline of Protestant pessimism which preceded the American Revolution. A God deduced from reason and, moreover, reasonable no longer resembles the

**Terrible God by Calvin. I also do not see how to interpret, a little earlier, the Scottish Enlightenment (so much in interaction with the French), which included thinkers like David Hume, Adam Smith or Adam Ferguson, without diagnosing a substantial relaxation of the Protestant faith in the upper middle classes.**

**In Great Britain, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, combining their effects, gave rise to a feeling of threat and, why not, a renewed fear of damnation. A Protestant revival engulfed England and Scotland between 1780 and 1840. In England, it affected the dominant Anglican Church, as well as the non-conformists heirs of the Puritans of the**

**xvii<sup>e</sup> century. The religious census of 1851 reveals quite astonishing rates of practice in an already highly urbanized and industrialized country. In the megalopolis of London, the attendance rate at the religious oce reaches 40%. In the urban districts of the Industrial North and the Midlands it is between 44 and 50%. The overall average for all districts in England is 66%. In the land of Wales, it is 84% <sup>11</sup>.**

**Revitalized Protestantism of the 19th centur<sup>e</sup> century reveals a specific religious geography: South-East England, around London, is predominantly Anglican; In Northern England, Wales and Cornwall, non-conformist Protestant sects prevail, the Methodists in particular. We note a correspondence between working-class industrial areas and this non-conformist Protestantism, a coincidence which tells us why, in English history, religious consciousness and**

**class consciousness have intertwined so well will come <sup>12</sup>. We are back.**

## ***From active Protestantism to zombie Protestantism then zero***

**It was this two-headed Protestantism that collapsed between 1870 and 1930. What I call a zombie Protestant society was then born, a world in which religious practice withered away but where the social values of religion persisted, as well as the rites of passage prescribed by the various Churches. Neither baptism, nor marriage, nor burial are called into question.**

**But, a sign that we no longer respect all the biblical commandments – “grow and multiply” – fertility is falling, and first of all in the middle classes.**

**Deprived of its Protestant framework, Great Britain discovered pure nationalism (which now better associates England and Scotland in a common entity, superior to their various Churches) and participated, without much qualms, in the butchery of the First World War. This war, it should be noted, beyond the violent military confrontation of France and Germany, opposed at a more fundamental level the two main economic powers of the time, two Protestant countries in the process of passing to the stage zombie: Germany and Great Britain.**

**Progressive liberalism and laborism (which eventually absorbed its liberal godfather) were the most visible political emanations of this zombie Protestantism. The vast majority of the cadres of ascending laborism came from non-conformist sects.**

**It is always this ghostly Protestantism which allows Great Britain, between 1939 and 1945, to remain a united, effective, moral community, less nationalist at this stage than in 1914, but which accepted with resignation and dignity a necessary war .**

**A slight return of religion traveled throughout the world**  
**Western world after the Second World War**

masking a much more massive resurgence of zombie Christianity, Protestant or Catholic, that is to say values of decency and conformism derived from religion independently of any religious practice. The shock waves of Nazi nihilism had spread far and wide. The developed world was getting back on its feet. This was the time when there was maximum family conformity, constituting the basis of the baby boom. This recovery in fertility was based on a particularly clear distribution of male and female roles. Alongside or above family conformism, the *Welfare State*, the post-war social state, was the ultimate incarnation of zombie Christianity, its apotheosis.

The transition from the zombie stage to state zero occurs from 1960s <sup>14</sup>. This change is linked, as we have seen, to the development of higher education, to the educational stratification which resulted from it, and to social atomization. The number baptisms are falling, <sup>15</sup> that of illegitimate unions is exploding, just like that of divorces, remarriages and single-parent families. The frequency of cremation is increasing. In 1888, at the very beginning of the zombie phase, cremation represented 0.01% of funerals, in 1939 3.5%, in 1947 10.5%. In 1960, at the dawn of the national revolution, 34.7%. In 2021, cremation accounts for 78.4%. Like “marriage for all,” the prevalence of cremation clearly indicates that Protestantism has reached ground zero. The establishment of “marriage for all”, however, has the advantage of providing a date symbolically marking the end of Christianity in a country. In England, it's 2014.

This is why the neoliberalism of the Thatcher era, post-Beatles and the Rolling Stones, against a backdrop of cohabitation outside marriage and illegitimate births (without forgetting sexual freedom which goes hand in hand), is not the liberalism of the Age of <sup>16</sup>. THE Atonement. Classical liberalism had certainly adopted free trade and left the Irish to starve, but it coexisted with a

active Protestantism, which held society together, and endowed the basic Briton with a superego (man, corrupted by original sin, is bad, in general and sexually) and an ego ideal (redemption, salvation, etc.). It accompanied the industrial revolution, this massive increase in the production of things by engineers, technicians and workers, qualified or not. Neoliberalism, for its part, emancipated finance and proceeded to destroy the productive apparatus. In its pure and perfect market there are men without morality, simply greedy.

Succeeding the active Protestant of the first liberalism and the zombie Protestant of the *Welfare State*, the ideal man of Thatcherite neoliberalism is a zero Protestant.

## ***Social and political disintegration***

The linked concepts of active, zombie and zero Protestantisms provide an effective periodisation of Britain's social history. Take the example of the education system, as a producer and reproducer of the social structure. We can imagine the *public schools* (private schools) of the 1880s-1960s as places of fulfillment and then of

stabilization of zombie Protestantism <sup>17</sup>. Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse, Westminster, Winchester... Religion became formal there but the children of the aristocracy were merged with those of the new upper middle classes in an ethic of sobriety, repression of emotions, marked by masochism (with Spartan dormitory, parsimonious heating and corporal punishment), which owed much to the severe ethics of Calvinism. We learned a little Latin and Greek, less mathematics and science. From this came British decency, the “*stiff upper lip*” (the stoicism of one who never

complains) and, by counter-repressive ricochet, no doubt, this sense of humor that I felt very threatened in the area of deportations in Rwanda.

The social project was to train through school a ruling class capable of governing the Empire. It will appeal to the Protestant American upper classes, currently being reconfigured at the end of the

XIX<sup>e</sup> century, and they will produce an attenuated version of it.

The regime of *public schools*, already less rigorous in the 1930s, softened even more with the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Thatcherite neoliberalism and its support, how to say, amoral, zero Protestantism, allowed them to mutate into *independent schools*, still intended for the children of the privileged 6%, but which strive to reconcile, in an unstable compound, a better educational level and high comfort. The registration fee is rising; the children of rich Chinese, Russians and Nigerians contribute, through the cost of their education, to balancing the accounts. But little or nothing of the ancient ethics remains. Independent *schools* express and reproduce the zero state of British Protestantism.

In the political domain, religious evolution was mixed with social upheavals. Traditionally, a bipolar vision of the social structure – *working-class* and others – underpinned the two-party political system, which was already encouraged by first-past-the-post voting; *Conservative* versus *Labor*,

Labor having taken over from the Liberals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

But by 1920, the service sector actually represented 51% of employment in Great Britain and the real center of gravity of the social structure was what is known across the Channel as the lower middle *-class*. ), hardly an obsession

underground of England <sup>18</sup>. The confrontation of the Tories and the Labor has masked this ancient centralization of the objective class structure; it worked because it was itself anchored in zombie religious arontement, stemming from the Victorian era,



between the Anglican Church and non-conformist sects. The distribution of the two religious tendencies, even in their zombie state, still determined the political geography: the map of the Tory party was that of the Anglican Church, the map of Labor that of the non-conformist sects and more generally of the most rigid Protestantism; it included northern England, Wales and the majority of Scotland.

The reality of the class structure and the gradual passage of Protestantism to stage zero explain why Margaret Thatcher was able to destroy the power of the unions, including the muscular power of the miners. The persistence of bipartisanship was no longer based either on the objective socio-economic structure or on a zombie religious structure. Bipartisanship has however survived, thanks to the voting method, but it is not impossible that the violent verbal confrontations which currently characterize the House of Commons only exist to mask the loss of ideological substance of the parties. Since Tony Blair, Labor is no longer capable of denying an economic path different from that of conservatives.

Liz Truss may have been only the accidental incarnation of the British petty-bourgeois unconscious, succeeding the opposition between the aristocracy and the working class. Dualism formerly resulted in very polarized accents, which are fading; however, it contributed to structuring the nation. Its rupture exposes a society stratified by higher education, atomized by the atrophy of religion, shapeless, neither national nor class, overhung by an ideological elite which fishes for reasons to divide itself into ethnic and racial questions. woke "labor" and antiwoke "conservative" people. It is, paradoxically, in this context that a predominantly anti-woke Conservative Party succeeded in forming an ultra-woke government. The truth is that the leadership of the Conservative Party barely differs, culturally, from that of the Labor Party. All these little people went through university, where woke values reign.

The Brexit period coincided with the advent of a religious zero state.

In 2014, the referendum on Scottish independence took place. The “no” had won, but only narrowly, and above all because the elderly people did not want it. The end of Protestantism explains Scottish dissidence very well. What made the Act of Union of 1707 possible, as Linda Colley has shown so well, was the fact that, although Scotland and England originally saw themselves as two distinct nations, they were also two Protestant nations. As Protestantism disappeared, this link was unraveled. Hence a Scotland which no longer seems to know what it is, whether it should leave the United Kingdom or not, reconnect with the EU or not. The formerly Catholic workers of the Glasgow region, now bearers of zero Catholicism, voted there for the Scottish National Party, of Presbyterian tradition and which, as we have seen, failed to choose a Muslim leader.

Brexit, for its part, pitted not only the highly educated and the uneducated, but the young and the old, in a completely astonishing mixed double, since the elderly and those who had not had higher education allies to adopt Brexit. The most powerful motivation among popular circles was probably to stop immigration from Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. This suggests neither a nation rediscovering the dynamism of its youth, nor an optimistic people. The so-called popular press (“tabloids”), *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Express*, in the hands of various billionaires, including Rupert Murdoch, Australian-American tycoon, supported Brexit. A notable fraction of the oligarchy

y was therefore <sup>19</sup>. The presence of Rupert Murdoch at favorable generic evokes more the ascendancy of the Americanosphere than the powerful origin of a new English revolution. The role of Australians in England in recent developments in British society and politics merits in-depth study; I have

I have come across many in my readings about Great Britain who have a non-European vision of History.

The hypothesis of a zero state of English Protestantism helps explain the dismantling of the Red Wall. The 2019 general election gave the Conservatives a large majority, but commentators were especially struck by the fall of Labor strongholds in the north of the country. In many constituencies in this region, for the first time, Conservative candidates were elected, ruining a Labor alliance

almost centuries-old <sup>20</sup>. This phenomenon was seen as a consequence of Brexit, an expression of recognition towards Boris Johnson who had supported the popular aspiration for independence. Johnson then made some intelligent noises about the need to revitalize the industry. I think, for my part, that the inhabitants of this region were above all deprived of their Labor political identity by the reux of the religious substrate, which was superimposed on the reux of the industrial economy.

The population of the north of England is no longer workers, it is post-industrial, with all the odd jobs in the tertiary sector that this deskilling implies. Laborism was born of industry and non-conformism; deindustrialization and zero Protestantism, combined, were bound to shake it one day.

Let us conclude on Brexit: it did not manifest a return of the nation, but resulted from its decomposition. The elderly expressed their nostalgia, popular voters their anomie, the oligarchs of the press a preference for the Americanosphere. If in 2014 Ukraine rejected Russia (and thus neutralized its oligarchs who were so close to it), in 2016 England chose the United States (and in fact kept its oligarchs who were so linked to them). England supports Ukraine's independence at a time when it is losing its own. No wonder then that this support is parodic, since she herself is forgetting what independence is.

## ***When hatred of the proletariat replaces racism***

All advanced societies have been transformed by mass higher education, as well as by the return of subjective inegalitarianism and the resulting objective inequalities. In the case of England, the opposition between those with higher education and others has been complicated by racial identities.

previous class and of a strength without equivalent elsewhere<sup>21</sup>

I wrote, in 1994, in *The Destiny of Immigrants*, that what differentiated England from the United States and made American-style racism impossible there was that in the eyes of the English the

white workers were already, since the mid- 19th century<sup>e</sup> century in

Unless a race apart from<sup>22</sup>. To the extent that several races whites coexisted in England, it was hardly conceivable that, in the American way, we would focus on blacks. Brexit and its aftermath have confirmed this hypothesis: the detestation of the populo has become such in England above that a preference has been declared for blacks in particular, and for BAME people in general. Remember that the most highly educated voted overwhelmingly *Remain* (Cambridge and Oxford at 73.8% and 70%).

According to *Brexiters*, by leaving the European Union, England could take back control of its destiny. But the referendum did not result in what would have made this aspiration achievable: a reconciliation of higher educated people who wanted to stay in Europe and secondary educated people who wanted to leave. The usual resentment of the upper middle classes against the popular world has only gotten worse.

Let us note in passing that the simple, highly educated do not generally control the United Kingdom, the super-rich linked to the United States, yes. The implementation of Brexit by the

government of Boris Johnson, if it suggested a remanence of the authentically democratic temperament, could also imply that the United Kingdom was dominated by a fraction of an oligarchy having retained a certain capacity for autonomous political action. The links established between London and New York by globalized finance, in order to co-manage tax havens in particular, make me prefer the second hypothesis.

We have therefore witnessed a very singular phenomenon across the Channel since Brexit. Upper educated classes increasingly favorable to everything that the populace hates: diversity, ethnic minorities and especially immigration, this decisive driver of the *Leave vote*. The proportion of university graduates who voted *Remain* and who want immigration to be reduced has fallen by 20 points to just 23%, while the proportion who want it to be reduced

increase was multiplied by three to reach 31% How can we not see this as an anti-popular provocation?

[23](#)

Let's return to the completely strange statistics which reveal that BAME people have privileged access to higher education. We can wonder if this avowed preference for them is not also, beyond good feelings motivating informal *armative action*, a revenge exercised by the English upper middle classes against their plebs. Plebs who are now required to be led by the visible descendants of the former dominated of the Empire. Mischievous minds may say that, since political power now counts for so little, we can leave it to the BAME people. Who knows ?

Nothing in the above suggests a nation that is sure of itself and knows where it is going. Everything, on the contrary, reveals a loss of meaning, an anxiety, which we can imagine needs scapegoats. The proles and the old had Europe. But what do the *Remain* supporters have?

Russia had, in a sense, made itself a scapegoat at the disposal of the British middle classes, with its children of oligarchs placed en masse in English private schools, and especially with its real estate investments in London, direct or under the covered in British shell companies. On the eve of the war, the western part of London, where the Russians had bought lavishly, was nicknamed Londongrad.

Roman Abramovich's purchase of the Chelsea football club almost single-handedly symbolized the United Kingdom's new status as an inert, extinct or prostitute nation.

## ***Zero Protestantism, zero nation***

The French, I said, believe they invented the nation during the French Revolution; they do not know (or do not want to know) that, in their case, belonging to the nation has only replaced belonging to the Christian people. As good heirs of Catholic universalism, we have remained attached, despite the existence of our new nation-state, to the idea of the universal man.

The history of Protestant countries is completely different. The nation was born there earlier. Born from the separation from Rome, Protestantism required that all nationals have access to religious writings in the vernacular language, in this case English; he gave birth to a people apart, chosen by God. The first English revolution, for the greater glory of this God, beheaded the king.

Oliver Cromwell, who owed his power to his role as founder of the New Model Army, attempted to establish the first combined military and religious regime in European history. Let

us listen to William Blake in the last quatrain of his poem "Jerusalem":

***I will not cease from Mental Fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my  
hand: Till we have built  
Jerusalem, In England's green & pleasant Land.***

**(I will not cease my inner battle Nor  
rest my sword Until we  
have built Jerusalem On the  
green and smiling lands of England.)**

These verses, in which the national and the religious are intimately mixed, were written in 1804, published in 1808 and set to music by Hubert Parry in 1916. "Jerusalem" has become for England an eloquent national anthem, much more capable of lift the soul than the gloomy *God Save the King*. In 1962, it was the music chosen by Tony Richardson for his film *The Solitude of the Long-distance Runner* (based on a short story by Alan Sillitoe), which shows us the revolt of a young worker against class privileges.

If, in Protestant countries, national and religious tendencies intertwine to this extent, we suspect that the final emergence of religion could imply that of national sentiment. Zero Protestantism, more, or rather less than an inert nation, denies a zero nation.

Zero Protestantism, as we will see, is also a problem for the Scandinavian nations, even if their eccentric, and so to speak provincial, character protects them from too much turbulence.

1. Wikipedia, accessed September 13, 2023.

2. Linda Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, London, Pimlico Books, 1994.

3. *Britannia Unchained: Global Lessons for Growth and Prosperity*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012. The book is signed by five British parliamentarians: Kwasi Kwarteng, Priti Patel, Dominic Raab, Chris Skidmore and Liz Truss.

4. This chire and the following refer to BAME people born in England.

5. Access rate to higher education: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/higher-education/entry-rates-into-higher-education/latest>.

6. Julian Assange is the founder of WikiLeaks. In 2010, following the WikiLeaks revelations about how the United States and its allies were waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan, Assange gained immense notoriety. He was then at the heart of a political-judicial affair which involved Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, and which deprived him of his liberty from 2010 in circumstances such that he could be qualified as a prisoner. policy.

7. *The Guardian*, “Children Raised Under UK Austerity Shorter than European Peers, Study Finds”, June 21, 2023.

8. On the economic and social evolution of the United Kingdom, see the extraordinary *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth Century History*, by David Edgerton, 2019, Penguin.

9. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/microsite/outsourcing /story/0,13230,933818,00.html>.

10. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Plon, 1967, p. 33.

11. KDM Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems. The Geography of Victorian Religion*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 415.

12. Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1989*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

13. Highly noted in Britain by Calum G. Brown in *The Death of Christian Britain. Understanding Secularization 1800-2000*, London, Routledge, 2009.

14. This is what Calum G. Brown showed very well in *The Death of Christian Britain*, using other words. He talks about Protestantism where I talk about zombie Protestantism.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

16. See Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement. The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785-1865*, Oxford University Press, 1986.

17. See Francis Green and David Kynaston, *Engines of Privilege. Britain's Private School Problem*, London, Bloomsbury, 2019.

18. Mike Savage, *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, London, Pelican Books, 2015, p. 38.

19. Kathryn Simpson, “Tabloid Tales: How the British Tabloid Press Shaped the Brexit Vote”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, volume 61, n 2, 2022, p. 302-322.

20. See Deborah Mattinson, *Beyond the Red Wall. Why Labor Lost, How the Conservatives Won and What Will Happen Next ?*, Hull, Biteback Publishing, 2020.



**21.** See Owen Jones, *Chavs. The Demonization of the Working Class*, London, Verso, 2016.

**22.** Emmanuel Todd, *The Destiny of Immigrants. Assimilation and segregation in Western democracies*, Seuil, 1994.

**23.** Matthew Goodwin, *Values, Voice and Virtue*, London, Penguin, 2023, p. 21.

## CHAPTER 7

### ***Scandinavia: from feminism to warmongering***

One of the surprises of the Ukrainian war was the appearance of a Protestant warmongering center in Northern Europe. The war showed that Norway is an active military agent of the United States in Europe. Denmark is undoubtedly even more embedded in the American system. Finland and Sweden, for their part, joined NATO with a sense of urgency. We will see that this warmongering predates the war and that it largely stems, like that of the United Kingdom, from a social dynamic internal to nations.

The requests for entry into NATO from Sweden and Finland are, in the light of history, as astonishing as British warmongering. These countries had a tradition of neutrality, very old in the case of Sweden, post-World War II in that of Finland. Above all, no threat loomed over them. The Russians wanted to maintain peaceful relations with the West through a Finland which they had not touched since the end of the Second World War. As for imagining that Russia could attack Sweden, it must be said bluntly and on a

familiar mode: it's madness. If we can conceive that the Finns made an error of analysis, drawn towards NATO by Estonia, their linguistic cousin, we must in the case of the Swedes, who do not even have a common border with the Russia (unlike the Finns obviously, but also the Norwegians), diagnose an outburst relating to psychiatry. In the grip of intense Russophobia, would Swedish leaders consider avenging their country's defeat by Peter the Great between 1700 and 1721? Russia was in the front line to carve up the Baltic Empire from Sweden, but with the help of Denmark, part of the Polish nobility and, to deliver the final blow, Prussia and Great Britain. Little Sweden has been effective and tough for a long time, but I don't believe in giving up its neutrality to reconquer the Baltic.

This nonsense really happened. Here too, the actors are sincere. If the threat from Russia is not real, the fear of Russia is. I therefore do not intend to denounce the accession to NATO of Finland and Sweden, but to understand the origin of this fear, just as I endeavored to elucidate the warmongering of the United Kingdom. This chapter, however, will be very short. The Scandinavian countries are not major players in the conflict. Their case is mainly of interest in confirming that the terminal collapse of Protestantism is one of its hidden engines. Sweden's officially feminist identity will also allow us to briefly address the "feminist" dimension of Western commitment.

## ***Something rotten in the kingdom of Denmark (and Norway)***

Before coming to the cases of Sweden and Finland, let us quickly examine those of Denmark and Norway,

integrated into NATO well before the crisis.

Norway was a possession of Denmark for a long time and it only obtained its final independence in 1905, after a short period of Swedish domination between 1814 and 1905. After having acquired its independence, it was the scene of passionate linguistic clashes between the proponents of Riksmål, Bokmål and Landsmål (or Nynorsk), but he knew that the usual Norwegian is a variant of Danish. More seriously, through their mastery of English, the Scandinavians are close to bilingualism.

Norway, as we have seen, helped the Americans sabotage the Nord Stream gas pipelines. Denmark, for its part, has long behaved like an annex of American intelligence services. He participated in tapping Angela Merkel's phone. In collaboration with the NSA, a data collection and storage center was built on a small island east of Copenhagen to spy on Western allies rather than the Russians. Let us quote France 24 here to underline the very banal nature of this information:

How Denmark became the NSA's listening post in Europe: Sunday's revelations that Danish spies helped the US NSA monitor European leaders underline the leading role this Scandinavian country plays for the American intelligence services. A collaboration that

[1](#)

has only become more pronounced over the years

Denmark has become a de facto member of the club of “ Five Eyes ”, which, remember, brings together the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

We must also note that, in a Norwegian or Danish political career, the post of Prime Minister can lead naturally to the NATO secretariat. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark from 2001, resigned to become Secretary General of NATO from 2009 to 2014, when he was replaced by Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of

Norway until 2013. Rasmussen is now “advisor  
ocieux” to bring Ukraine closer to NATO Member<sup>2</sup>.

of the European Union, Denmark is a pawn of the United States, sometimes more advanced than Norway, even if it is, traditionally, less effective on a military level. In July 2023, the Danish Margrethe Vestager, European Commissioner for Competition, tried to impose Fiona Scott Morton, an American, as chief economist of her sector. It is easy to imagine the impartiality she would have demonstrated towards the Gafa.

Let us consider, with a probability of 80%, that a senior Danish official placed in the European system is a silent representative of Washington.

The integration of Norway and Denmark into the American control system inclines me to envisage an element of pragmatic interest in the Swedish desire to enter NATO. Central star of the Scandinavian constellation, this country of 10.4 million inhabitants, surrounded by Norway of 5.4 million inhabitants, Denmark of 5.9 million and Finland of 5.5 million, has always been the dominant power in this region, an ideological leader, notably during its long social-democratic experience between 1920 and the end of the 1990s. Could it without reacting leave NATO, that is to say the United States, subject, after Denmark and Norway, Finland to their direct control? Joining NATO will likely help it preserve its influence in Scandinavia by implementing direct military coordination with smaller partners around it. The unnecessary conflict with Russia still seems a very high price for this modest advantage. I put forward this reason without really believing it.

***Social excitement in Sweden and Finland***

The social and economic situation of Sweden or Finland cannot in any way be compared to that of England. According to the World Bank, gross domestic product per capita in 2022 was \$55,873 in Sweden, \$50,536 in Finland, \$48,432 in Germany, \$45,850 in the United Kingdom and \$40,963 in France. The relatively modest GDP per capita of the French compared to the British, whose difficulties in terms of food and health are much more serious than ours, reminds us, however, that this indicator must be handled with caution. We will see that in the United States it has the particularity of being downright a fantasy. Finland also stands out, in PISA-type surveys on student achievement, with extremely high scores. Scandinavia, however, is not immune to the fall in intelligence quotients observed in

most Protestant countries <sup>3</sup>. IQ is an instrument of measure well accepted and therefore widely used in Protestant countries, because this religion, as we have seen, hardly believes in a priori equality between men. Measuring differences in intelligence between individuals therefore does not cause any discomfort. Catholic and Republican France, on the other hand, does not like the notion of IQ. Regardless, James Flynn and Michael Shayer noted that the decline in IQs, starting around 1995, is uniform across Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

Above all, Sweden and Finland have not escaped the crisis of the "Western democracies" which results primarily, I repeat, from the new educational stratification. These two countries have seen the emergence of identity-based, xenophobic, far-right, populist parties (we no longer really know what to call them if we want to remain neutral and objective). As I write, the True Finns Party participates in the government and the Sweden Democrats, without participating in theirs, support it. If Denmark has avoided the formation of a populist identity party, it is essentially because the Danish social democrats have themselves integrated the xenophobic software and present themselves as "the European left party

who first understood that immigration is a huge problem.”

Why this discomfort? If the Scandinavians were affected by neoliberalism, they did not sacrifice their social state; it is therefore impossible to give an overly economic explanation to their discomfort.

Before any interpretation, we must emphasize that Scandinavian anxiety did not wait for the Russian question to arise and that the Ukrainian war above all allowed the manifestation of a military concern that pre-existed it. We have proof of this thanks to a work dating back to 2018. In *Cultural Evolution*, Ronald Inglehart, based on the World Values Survey (which he founded), has

explored the evolution of “values” in a large number of countries <sup>4</sup>. An opinion poll most often only reaches the conscious of individuals, who only express what is socially tolerated. However, among the often banal answers collected by the World Values Survey, we find the fascinating ones to the question of whether the respondents would be ready to commit to defending their country by arms. Inglehart noted a decline in what one might call military citizenship throughout the Western world, in line with the policy of sending arms but not men to Ukraine. applied by NATO. One exception: Scandinavia, where Inglehart notes an increase in the willingness to fight for one's country. In Sweden, this progression made it possible to restore military service in 2017, well before Russia invaded Ukraine.

Inglehart's work is also interesting for the explanation that the author gives of the phenomenon, or, rather, for his inability to provide one that is satisfactory. He attributes, in fact, the general decline of interest in military matters in the Western world to the feminization of society. The thesis is attractive and would suit me a priori since, in *Where are they ?*, I associated the decline in the sense of the collective, and therefore in the interest in the thing

military, to the emancipation of women <sup>5</sup>. A problem arises however: Scandinavia is, it is obvious, the most feminist region in the world. We are faced with an aporia.

Let's try to resolve it or, at least, propose a hypothesis. Could it be that feminism, in this case, far from encouraging pacism, favors warmongering?

The anti-Russian activism of certain Swedish and Dutch women politicians attests to this. Female Prime Ministers, Magdalena Andersson in Sweden, Sanna Marin in Finland, have determined their countries to join NATO. Keeping in mind Inglehart's hypothesis, which associates women with the rejection of war, we can imagine among some of them, placed at the highest level, that of international relations, a form of imposture: " War was men's thing, we must show ourselves as determined as them, or even more. » My guess here is that these women have unconsciously absorbed a dose of toxic masculinity. A statistical analysis of female and male political attitudes towards the Ukrainian war would make a great thesis subject: Victoria Nuland (American Under-Secretary of State for Ukraine), Ursula von der Leyen (President of the European Commission ) and Annalena Baerbock (German Foreign Minister), these war enthusiasts, do they represent more than themselves, or not? Should we see the relative prudence of Scholz and Macron as an expression of masculinity?

The Swedish or Finnish identity populist parties, mentioned above, the True Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats, have the characteristics of having a strongly male electorate. Today we would say "strongly gendered". They were suspected of sympathy for Russia.

I'm not being completely serious, I admit, but we must nevertheless integrate into our reasoning that there really is a malaise in relations between the sexes in Scandinavia, and that it manifests itself in politics.



## ***End of Protestantism, crisis of the nation***

A simpler hypothesis, deriving from the analysis of the British case, offers us a key. The crisis is religious and cultural. In Scandinavia too, the nation is the island of Protestantism and, there too, its evanescence puts the nation in danger. The zero state that it has reached generates anxiety of national origin, and therefore international in small countries, despite an economy that is not in too bad shape. Hence, perhaps, a need for security that entry into NATO satisfies, to ward off a non-existent external threat. Because it is from within Scandinavian societies, which no longer really know what they are doing in History, that the feeling of danger is rising. What Sweden and Finland expressed in asking to join NATO, which has now happened, was not the need to be protected against the Russians; it is in its raw state a need to belong.

1. <https://www.france24.com/fr/éco-tech/20210531-comment-le-danemark-est-devenu-le-poste-d-école-de-la-nsa-en-europe>.

2. <https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/vu-du-danemark-anders-fogh-rasmussen-en-mission-pour-railleurs-l-ukraine-de-l-otan>.

3. James R. Flynn and Michael Shayer, "IQ Decline and Piaget: Does the Rot Start at the Top? », *Intelligence*, vol. 66, Jan.-Feb. 2018, p. 112-121.

This article, however, denies the decline in IQ in the United States, which the same journal will identify five years later. See below, p. 259.

4. Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Evolution. People's Motivations Are Changing, and Reshaping the World*, Cambridge University Press, 2018.

5. E. Todd, *Where are they ?*, *op. cit.*

## CHAPTER 8

### ***The true nature of America: oligarchy and nihilism***

From the introduction, I praised the merits of John Mearsheimer and his courage. In [chapter 10](#), devoted to the American ruling classes, I will sing the praises of his colleague and accomplice Stephen Walt, who has long demanded that the United States return to a reasonable conception of the world, a world in which it no longer aspires to a “liberal hegemony” but would be content to preserve their power by playing on international balances, weighing according to their interest (*balancing*) in favor of this or that other power. The United States is the leading military power but it has no capacity to directly dominate everything. I deeply respect Walt and Mearsheimer, because they are both able to keep a cool head in a world of excited neoconservative ideologues with no military skills. Their vision of history, however, seems mechanical to me because they look at nation-states as compact and stable elements. However, to understand the foreign policy of a country, it is necessary to analyze its internal developments in depth. These two so-called

posit, for example, as I said in the introduction, that the United States is still a nation-state. Nothing is less sure. America, moreover, would be stable and, better yet, sheltered from the rest of the world. The traditional geopolitical vision supposes that the United States constitutes, between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between these two non-powers that are Canada and Mexico, an island away from all danger, a nation which risks nothing and can therefore allow itself to make all conceivable errors on the international level. They have never had to fight for their survival, like France, Germany, Russia, Japan, China and even Great Britain. In this chapter and the next two, I will try to show that, on the contrary, the United States risks a lot in the current situation. Their economic dependence on the rest of the world has become immense; their society is breaking down. The two phenomena interact. Losing control of their external resources would cause a fall in the population's standard of living, which is already not great. But it is the characteristic of an empire to no longer be able to separate what, in its evolution, is internal from what is external. We must, therefore, start from the internal dynamics of society, or rather from its regression, to

I ask the reader in advance to excuse the schematic nature of the three chapters which will be devoted to the United States. Not everything will be demonstrated there. The crisis of such a complex society should be the subject of a book. But time is running out: the war is taking us ever further. My goal is not to achieve a high level of academic perfection but to contribute to the understanding of an ongoing disaster.

By successively studying the stability of Russian society, the disintegration of Ukrainian society, the bad conscience of the former popular democracies, the end of the European dream of independence, the weakening of the United Kingdom as a nation (mother nation rather than sister of the United States)

Scandinavian, we have gradually moved closer to the center of the global crisis, the American black hole. Because the real problem facing the world today is not Russia's very limited desire for power, it is the decadence of its

American center, she without limit<sup>1</sup>

From this decadence, I will only study what can serve to tear apart the external action of the United States. I will do this in clear and negative terms. Many other than me write that America is still America, that its democracy still functions (even if the Trump phenomenon and its after-effects make them hesitate on this point), and above all that, in its conflict with Russia defends freedom, democracy, the protection of minorities, in short, justice. And that's very good. I think and say the opposite. Together we contribute to perpetuating the existence of a more or less pluralist West, if not egalitarian.

## ***Nihilism, a necessary concept***

I was very hesitant to apply the concept of nihilism to the United States, more than to Ukraine or Europe. These have had a very dark history. The United States was born in a climate of optimism; their declaration of independence speaks of “the pursuit of happiness”.

Having read, a long time ago, *The Revolution of Nihilism* by Hermann Rauschning<sup>2</sup>, I completed this reading with that of Leo Strauss' pamphlet “On German Nihilism”, which responds in Rauschning<sup>3</sup>. I admit that comparing Hitler's Germany and the United States of Biden is outrageous, absurd, unbearable. Anti-Semitism, without being non-existent across the Atlantic, is not at the heart of American concerns. America even has

accomplished an emancipation of the Jews as we have seen few in history. If I have resigned myself to using the concept of nihilism, which, in fact, establishes a parallel between the German and American trajectories, it is to help the reader's mind, after mine, to make a shift. For technical reasons too.

It seemed necessary to me to have a central concept that symbolized America's conversion from good to evil. Our intellectual problem, deep down, is that we love America.

The United States was one of the fallers of Nazism; they showed us the way to achieve prosperity and relaxation. To fully accept the idea that today they trace the one that leads to poverty and social atomization, the concept of nihilism is essential.

As for the technical reasons, what also forces me to use this concept is the observation that the values and behavior of American society today are fundamentally negative.

Like German nihilism in the past, this negativity is the product of a decomposition of Protestantism, but this does not occur at the same stage. Nazism appeared in its first phase after between 1880 and 1930 Protestantism had ceased to be an active religion. Nazism corresponds to an eruption of despair during its *zombie phase*, at a time when Protestant values, positive and negative, persisted despite the glory of religious practice. The zombie phase of American Protestantism has been overwhelmingly positive. It goes, roughly, from the presidency of Roosevelt to that of Eisenhower, and it saw the creation of a social state, universities providing mass and quality education, and the spread of an optimistic culture which seduced the world. . This America had recovered the positive values of Protestantism (high educational level, egalitarianism among Whites) and was trying to get rid of its negative values (racism, puritanism). The current crisis corresponds, on the other hand, to the landing in state zero of Protestantism. This allows us to understand both the Trump phenomenon and the

**Biden's foreign policy, the internal rot as well as the external megalomania, the violence that the American system exercises on its own citizens and on those of other countries.**

**The German dynamic of the 1930s and the current American dynamic have in common that they have a vacuum as their driving force. In both cases, political life functions without values, it is only a movement which tends towards violence. Rauschning did not deny Nazism otherwise. First a member of the NSDAP, he left it: this conservative, normal so to speak, could not tolerate gratuitous violence. In today's America, I observe a dangerous state of emptiness in thought and ideas, with residual obsessions with money and power.**

**These cannot be goals in themselves, values. This void induces a propensity for self-destruction, militarism, endemic negativity, in short, nihilism.**

**A final, essential element made me adopt this concept: the refusal of reality. Nihilism, in fact, does not only reflect a need to destroy oneself and others. More profoundly, when it transforms into a kind of religion, it tends to deny reality. I will show how in the American case.**

## ***Spend more to die more***

**Here is immediately an example of applied nihilism: evolution of mortality in the United States.**

**In *Deaths of Despair*, published in 2020, Anne Case and Angus Deaton analyzed the increase since 2000 among <sup>4</sup>, specifically whites aged 45-54 – through alcoholism, suicide and opioid addiction – offset somewhat by a decline which continued among blacks. Alone among advanced countries, America is experiencing an overall decline in life expectancy: from**

78.8 years in 2014 to 77.3 years in 2020. A year later, in 2021, Americans lived on average 76.3 years, the British 80.7 years, the Germans 80.9 years, the French 82, 3 years, the Swedes 83.2 years and the Japanese 84.5 years. In 2020, Russia, at only 71.3 years old, still bore the mark, so to speak biological, of its tortured history. But Russian life expectancy was only 65.1 years in 2002 and has therefore increased by six years under Putin.

Figure 6.1 (in Chapter 6, on Great Britain) had already shown that the recent fall in life expectancy in the United States had been preceded by a slowdown in its growth, from 1980, during the neoliberal years . We also know that she did not recover quickly after Covid, unlike what happened elsewhere in the world.

developed <sup>5</sup> . The Covid also seems to have initiated a degradation in all ethnic groups.

The infant mortality rate, a harbinger of the future, indicates America's backwardness even more pronounced than that of the advanced countries it "protects" or those it fights. Around 2020, according to UNICEF, it was 5.4 per 1,000 live births in the United States, compared to 4.4 in Russia, 3.6 in the United Kingdom, 3.5 in France, 3.1 in Germany, 2.5 in Italy, 2.1 in Sweden and 1.8 in Japan <sup>6</sup> .

Comparing this American mortality with the great historical design set out in the Declaration of Independence of 1776 produces a striking effect. "We hold it as self-evident truth that all men are created equal and have been endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. » But the most astonishing thing is that the increase in mortality has gone hand in hand with the highest health spending in the world. In 2020, these represented 18.8% of American GDP, compared to 12.2% in France, 12.8% in Germany, 11.3% in Sweden, 11.9% in the United Kingdom.

Of course, these percentages present a low estimate since, on this same date, the GDP per capita in the United States was 76,000 dollars compared to 48,000 in Germany, 46,000 in the United Kingdom, 41,000 in France. The reader can have fun multiplying the percentage of GDP devoted to health by the GDP per capita; he will thus get an idea of the enormous financial effort theoretically made by the United States to care for its inhabitants. I say theoretically because, as we will see, all this reveals above all that the notion of GDP has a largely positive character.

There is worse – and it is now that the relevance of the concept of nihilism will appear in its fullness: Anne Case and Angus Deaton show that the increase in mortality occurred while part of these health expenditures were devoted to the *destruction* of the population. I am referring here to the opioid scandal. Large pharmaceutical companies, supported by well-paid and unscrupulous doctors, have made available to patients in moral distress, for economic and social reasons, dangerous, addictive painkillers, very frequently leading to direct death, alcoholism or suicide.

It is this phenomenon which explains the increase in mortality among white people aged 45-54. We therefore have to deal with the actions of certain higher categories which have the consequence of devastating part of the population. This borders on ignominy, but let's remain technical in the wording: we are here in the middle of zero morality. In 2016, Congress, held by these *lobbies* (which are legally and officially part of the American political system), passed the *Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act*, which prohibits health authorities from suspending the use of opioids. The “representatives” of citizens therefore drafted a law authorizing the pharmaceutical industry to continue to murder them <sup>7</sup>. Nihilism then? Yes of course.



## ***Flashback: Good America***

To understand the regressive dynamic at work in American society, we must remember what good America was and recall the logic that underpinned it. I am not going to dwell on the Rooseveltian America of the New Deal, explicitly "left", the one which decided to overtax the rich and which established a union counter-power, two essential elements of social balance which had the effect to integrate the working class into the middle classes and to make democratic mobilization possible during the Second World War.

I will broadly depict the America of Eisenhower, a Republican president, who occupied the White House for two terms, from 1953 to 1961.

In 1945, American manufacturing accounted for half of the world's industry. The educational level of the country was the highest of all, including in the Protestant area. By the interwar period, the secondary *high school* system had been massively developed. In the post-war period, it was the turn of the universities, thanks in particular to the *Servicemen's Readjustment Act* of 1944, better known as the "GI Bill", which, among other aids for civilian retraining, provided former conscripts with financial facilities to pursue higher education. Eisenhower's America was no longer more than two-thirds Protestant, but it remained entirely Protestant in its fundamental values. Catholics themselves accepted this focus on education, which for Jews was superfluous.

The post-war religious revival seems to have been particularly pronounced in America. Robert D. Putnam and David

E. Campbell places the "high tide" in the 1950s. These two authors<sup>8</sup> come close to the notion of a zombie religion since they deny that of the Americans of the time as largely civic and primarily set against atheistic communism. Appears

then the term “Judeo-Christianity” (which means absolutely nothing on a religious level). The country was experiencing a resurgence of zombie Protestantism at that time, with the exception that an important religious practice remained, which consolidated local communities but whose metaphysical meaning was not clear.

Eisenhower's America was steeped in an authentically democratic culture and concerned with the well-being of all citizens; its internal values coincide with those of its foreign policy in the fight against totalitarian communism.

Two downsides: Latin America remains a semi-colonial dependency and, of course, the segregation of blacks continues. But the first stirrings of the struggle for civil rights undermined, through desegregation, the restrictive principle of equality between whites only. The boycott campaign launched by Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King in 1955 led the Supreme Court in 1956 to declare segregation practiced on buses unconstitutional. The said Supreme Court was, however, designed by the Founding Fathers as an instrument of moderation of democracy, a center of power reserved for *the establishment*.

## ***The power elite around 1955***

So what kind of ruling elite did Eisenhower's America have? Although the country is already very ethno-religiously diverse, with massive Irish Catholic, Italian Catholic, Eastern and Central European Jewish and many other minorities, its ruling class does not. is in nothing. In *The Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills described in 1956 a narrow group

and totally WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) <sup>9</sup>. And not

**Low-level WASP.** We find *the Episcopalian establishment* over-represented there, the Episcopal Church being the American equivalent of the Anglican Church, whose Protestantism tolerates a good dose of hierarchy and social authority.

This Episcopalian elite was educated in private boarding schools that imitated the British educational system. At their peak was Groton, the school Franklin Delano Roosevelt attended before continuing his studies at Harvard. Like what was happening in England at the time, but in a more flexible and less Spartan style, the private schools of *the WASP establishment* were not obsessed with intellectual performance. The aim was to build “character”.

It is ritual to make fun of WASPs. And it is true that this upper class, like any ruling class, carried all kinds of ridiculous prejudices. The fact remains that it carried a morality and a requirement. Between 1941 and 1945, its youngest members were sent, like the rest of the mobilizable population, to war in Europe or the Pacific; they were, like Roosevelt, from this little enchanted world which had not hesitated to establish tax rates rising up to 90% on the upper income brackets.

Let us say goodbye to this WASP elite by examining the case of John Rawls, one of its representatives, exploited even before his death (in 2002), with a certain perversity, by those who, from 1980, applied themselves to dismantle democratic America.

John Rawls is the author of a famous *Theory of Justice*, published in 1971, at the end of this golden age. Read correctly, this book now seems like a funeral eulogy, as I will show.

Born in 1921, a generation and a half after Roosevelt, Rawls belonged to a lower category of WASP. A student at the Kent School, a good step below Groton, he then studied at Princeton rather than Harvard. He fought in the Pacific and returned haunted by intense moral concerns; an Episcopalian, he converted to atheism after observing the devastation on site

caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The result was the *theory of justice*, a theoretical formulation of the practice of the WASP upper classes during the blessed era. Justice, as Rawls denies it, consists of tolerating inequalities if they ultimately contribute to the well-being of the poorest part of the population. The irony is that Rawls formulated his social martingale shortly before rising inequality, far from benefiting the poor, began to decimate them. Let's look at this in more detail.

## ***“The triumph of injustice”: 1980-2020***

When, in fact, we look on "Google Ngram" at how the popularity of John Rawls evolved, we see that, modest in the decade after 1971, it took off shortly after 1980 and gained momentum between 1990 and 2006, it is that is to say at the very moment when the application of his theory could only show one thing: the conversion of America to injustice. The book's title

by Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, *The Triumph of Injustice* <sup>[10](#)</sup>, sums it up clearly, and its content illustrates it magnificently. At the end of an elegant calculation, the two authors come to the conclusion that tax rates in the United States have moved so far away from the tax regime introduced by the New Deal that we are now approaching an *at tax* . at a single rate, of 28% for the rich and the poor, with, the height of injustice, a fall in the tax rate on the four hundred richest taxpayers. If we add that the increase in American mortality affects people who have not passed beyond the stage of what is equivalent to high school, it becomes obvious that today's America materializes exactly the opposite of justice as conceived of it. Rawls. That the *Theory of Justice* has been acclaimed by politicians and

intellectuals from *think tanks* even as injustice triumphed is, from a sociological point of view, particularly vicious.

Was it a question of taunting the good people with a sort of economic-philosophical-satanic ritual? Nihilism, when you hold us... The global – sorry, Western – success of Rawls from the 1980s was planned, and in particular among these French idiots.

My friend and publisher Jean-Claude Guillebaud told me then, and he has since confirmed it, that *The Theory of Justice* had been translated by Éditions du Seuil in 1987, with the financial assistance of the CIA. I doubt that the Russian services will have, under Putin, succeeded in an operation of the same level in French intellectual life.

## ***Towards zero Protestantism in the United States***

Several factors have long concealed the disappearance of Protestantism (and religion in general) in the United States. First, practice rates higher than in Europe, but which detailed studies have shown to have been overestimated, even multiplied by two, because those surveyed were bragging; then, the evangelical *boom* of the 1970s, completed from the start

from the 1990s <sup>11</sup>. Ross Douthat's book *Bad Religion* teaches us that evangelicalism is a heresy, with no real connection to

severe classical <sup>12</sup>. Calvinism and Lutheranism were Protestantism; they required man to observe morality, economic and social for example, and he had given birth to progress. The religious revival of the 1970s, while it allowed some of its inspirations to earn a lot of money, above all brought with it regressive elements: a literalist reading of the Bible, a generally anti-scientific mentality and, above all, pathological narcissism. God is no longer there to demand, but to

**cajole the believer and distribute bonuses, psychological or material.**

**To discern the extent to which the evolution of American Protestantism was not so different from what happened in Western Europe, the surest thing is to follow the evolution of fertility. We know that in a literate population, the decline in fertility is the best indicator of a decline in religiosity: couples no longer feel monitored by divine authority. However, in the United States, this development was completely normal. In France, a leading country in birth control, the total fertility index was 2.1 children per woman in the 1930s; In 1940 it was 2 in the United States, and barely lower in the United Kingdom: 1.8. American couples rose to a level that was actually quite high, 3.6 children per woman in 1960. But by 1980, at the end of the evangelical *boom*, America had fallen to 1.8. At the same time, England were at 1.7 and France at 1.9. Nothing here indicates that true religion survived across the Atlantic.**

**Another indicator of ultimate dechristianization: the attitude towards homosexuality. In 1970, among the people who went to the church, 50% already accepted homosexuality<sup>13</sup>; in 2010, 70%. Among those who rarely attended, the acceptance rate rose to 83%. Let us finally take the flagship indicator of zero religion, marriage for all, which signals the passing of the active and zombie stages: in 2008, only 22% of generations born before 1946 accepted it, but 50% of those born between 1966 and 1990. I do not cite these chires in a conservative, repressive or nostalgic perspective. The acceptance of homosexuality and that of marriage for all are only retained here as proof of an irreversible cultural shift, and as indications of a zero state of religion. Christianity, Judaism and Islam condemn homosexuality, and for none of these religions marriage between people of the same sex has the slightest meaning. France, as we have seen, legalized same-sex marriage in 2013 and the United Kingdom in 2014. In the United States, it was in 2015 at the federal level. We do not observe**

no noticeable lag. 2015, therefore, year of zero religion. 2016, election of Donald Trump. 2022, Ukraine becomes the subcontractor in the war with Russia.

This zero state is unstable; it has its own dynamic which leads to nihilism, and even to its most accomplished form: the denial of reality. The United States was (with England) the first engine not only of the liberal revolution, but also of the sexual revolution and then of the "gender" revolution, which moved from the struggle for equality of the sexes to the transgender question. We will find these important ideological themes in the conic between the West and Russia. Let's start by thinking about the meaning they have within American society.

I leave aside gender equality, a legitimate demand which does not pose a conceptual problem; I also leave the emancipation of homosexuals there, beautiful and good without possible dispute, even in the eyes of skeptics resistant to "gay" ideology who do not see the interest in making the life of societies revolve around sexual preferences. The transgender question is another area, as soon as we realize that an individual can change their "gender", according to their taste, by simple declaration to the civil registry, or change their "sex" by wearing meaningful clothing, ingestion of hormones or surgery. My intention here is not to deny individuals the right to do what they want with their bodies and their lives, but to grasp the sociological and moral meaning - it's all one - of the centrality that has acquired the transgender issue in the United States and, more generally, throughout the Western world. The facts are simple and I will conclude quickly. Genetics tells us that we cannot transform a man (XY chromosomes) into a woman (XX chromosomes), and vice versa. To pretend to do so is *to weaponize the false*, a typically nihilistic intellectual act.

If this need to arm the false, to worship it and impose it as the truth of society predominates in a social category (the rather upper middle classes) and its media (the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*) , we have to deal with

a nihilistic religion. For me, a researcher, I repeat, judging is not my job but it is up to me to give the facts a correct sociological interpretation. Given the wide dissemination of the transgender theme in the West, we can once again consider that one of the dimensions of the zero state of religion in the West is nihilism.

### ***Zero Protestantism and the fall of intelligence***

According to my model of the evolution of societies, if 20 to 25% of a generation have received higher education, the idea comes to them that they have an intrinsic superiority: the dream of equality is followed by a legitimization of inequality. Let us summarize here, once again, this process as it took place in the United States, not only because they were the first to experience this decisive change, but also because they then acted on a global scale as if under the influence of a powerful and nagging impulse in favor of inequality. The development of higher education restratifies the population, it extinguishes the egalitarian ethos that mass literacy had spread, and, beyond that, any feeling of belonging to a community. Religious and ideological unity is shattered. A process of social atomization and reduction of the individual the

The threshold of 25% of higher education was reached in the United States in 1965 (Europeans are at least one generation behind). Oddly enough, it was accompanied almost immediately by intellectual decline at all levels.

The progression of higher education, following the Second World War, expressed a meritocratic ideal. The best had to go further or higher, for the good of all (Rawls). In the United States, meritocratic practice had become



technically based on the SATs, the *Scholastic Aptitude Tests* These <sup>14</sup> have two parts, one which assesses so-called verbal skills, the other mathematical skills.

Regarding the verbal part, a fall occurred between 1965 and 1980, followed by a stabilization until 2005, when the

The same fall <sup>15</sup>. Concerning mathematics, we see the continued between 1965 and 1980, a recovery between 1980 and 2005, then a relapse after 2005. The decline therefore affected both parts of the test.

The decline in the American educational level (which thirty years later will have its counterpart in France) is confirmed by a study by the National Center for Education Statistics, *Scores decline again for 13-year-old students in reading and mathematics*. The commentary clarifies that all ethnic groups have been affected, and the good ones like bad students <sup>16</sup>.

A concomitant phenomenon is that the intensity of studies has also declined. In 1961, we measured on average forty hours of effective work per week, but in 2003 twenty-seven hours

only, a drop of a third <sup>17</sup>.

A very recent study showed that between 2006 and 2018 the intelligence quotient also fell in the entire American population, although more quickly among those who

had not received higher education <sup>18</sup>. (I mentioned this phenomenon in the [previous chapter](#) concerning Scandinavia, where it was identified earlier.)

How can we not link this decline in educational efficiency to the disappearance of Protestantism, of which education was one of the assets? Once again, the heretical character of evangelicalism comes to light since its spread coincided among white Americans

with lower levels of education than Catholics <sup>19</sup>.

**This is the great paradox of this historical and sociological sequence: educational progress has caused, in the long term, an educational regression, because it has caused the disappearance of values favorable to education.**

## ***Zero Protestantism and Black Liberation***

**Protestantism, as I have said, does not believe in the equality of men. Even in the watered-down American version of Calvinism, there are the chosen and therefore the damned. The absolute Anglo-American nuclear family also predisposes to this conception of the world: unlike the egalitarian nuclear family of the Paris Basin, it does not determine any equivalence of children in terms of inheritance. In describing Eisenhower's zombie-happy Protestant America, I noted that blacks were not included in democracy, even though there were beginnings of the struggle for their rights. This exclusion was not an oversight, an imperfection: it was inherent to the socio-political system; it denied it – American liberal democracy – and allowed it to function.**

**What had allowed the United States to become a formidable democracy despite Protestant metaphysical inegalitarianism and despite the indifference to the equality of the absolute nuclear family was to have "fixed" inequality on "inferior races", the Indians then the blacks. For equality to reign among whites, it was necessary to separate, on one side, the chosen ones, the whites, and, on the other, the damned, the blacks (initially, the Indians). We can consider that the anti-Black racism of Irish and then Italian immigrants, quickly impeccable, and very unCatholic, was a good indicator of assimilation through the adoption of a social posture of Protestant origin.**

**In the United States, the black problem thus includes a central religious dimension. Racism and Protestantism are not**

separate variables. The confinement of blacks is Protestant damnation. It may be objected that most black Americans are, or rather were, Protestants themselves. But the Protestantism of black Americans – emotional, associated with the idea of survival in adversity carried by gospel – is precisely the characteristic of their own being. Black Protestant churches are segregated. In fact, black Protestantism also institutionalized, in its own way, racial difference.

If racism and segregation largely derived, ultimately, from religious values, we suspect that one of the consequences of the explosion of religion, active or zombie – that is to say of a mental system and social denymment of men as unequal and certain men as inferior – will be the liberation of black people. I am not talking here about the benevolent Protestants of the upper or middle classes who struggled, at the level

conscious, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the North, in New England in particular, for the emancipation of blacks; I'm talking about the unconscious of the masses, the deep mental attitudes.

We would have the following sequence: educational stratification leads to the implosion of Protestantism; this frees blacks from the principle of inequality. Then came the fight for civil rights, *armed action*, and finally the election in 2008 of Barack Obama, the first black president of the United States. The only obstacle remaining in America to the universal is uncertainty about the equality of children, and therefore of men, in the absolute nuclear family.

The sequence, however, has troubling consequences. Black inequality allowed white equality to function, and one of the unforeseen negative effects of black liberation was to disrupt American democracy. As blacks no longer embody the principle of inequality, white equality has been pulverized. Democratic sentiment is therefore even more threatened in America than elsewhere. Across the advanced world, higher education has undermined democratic sentiment.

But in the United States the sudden disappearance of white equality,

based on the inequality of blacks, has aggravated the phenomenon. This is the anthropological and religious backdrop of the powerful inegalitarian drift of American society in the years 1965-2022, which it would be wrong to consider only in its economic (the rise in income inequalities) or political (the erasure of the role of non-qualified citizens).

The liberation of blacks induced a new contradiction. It really took place; it is deep in terms of values. Classic American racism is well and truly dead and I would tend to think that even white Republican voters no longer believe that black people are inferior to them. Obama was indeed elected president; the current US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, is black. However, even emancipated, black people, to a large extent, remain trapped. Their emancipation occurred at a time when educational stratification was taking place, economic inequality was increasing, and educational levels and living standards were declining. Social mobility is lower today in the United States than in Europe. The emancipation of black Americans is accomplished while they are, statistically, at the bottom of the social pyramid, which makes it very difficult for them to escape their objective condition. Always concentrated in the lower stratum, they acquired citizenship in a society where the ideal of equal citizens had vanished. They become individuals similar to others at the moment when, deprived of the support of collective beliefs and the ego ideal that they imposed, the individual shrinks.

## **Falling from grace : *prisons, mass shootings and obesity***

If there are still authentic Protestants in the United States and if they observe their country, I think an expression comes to them

immediately comes to mind to describe it: *falling from g race*, the Fall.

Added to wealth inequalities is the fact that their increase has disintegrated the middle classes. In the ideal America of the 1950s, these included, as I said, the working class, which even formed the bulk of it. The liquidation of the working class by globalization has therefore caused the withering away of the middle classes.

All that remains is an upper middle class, perhaps 10% of the population, clinging to the oligarchy of the upper 0.1%, and which is trying not to fall. It is this upper middle class which opposes the resurgence of progressive taxation, more than the highest class, whose capital escapes

largely to tax The <sup>20</sup>.

unequal increases in mortality according to income, highlighted by Case and Deaton, add up to other elements which outline a fallen country. This liberal society, which defends democracy against Russian “autocracy”, has the highest incarceration rate in the world. In 2019, the number of prisoners per million inhabitants there was 531, compared to 300 in Russia – and I imagine that by recruiting mercenaries in prisons the Wagner group must have lowered this rate. The United Kingdom was at 143, France at 107, Germany at 67 and Japan at 34.

The United States is also the country where *mass shootings* have multiplied in a way

worrying since 2010 <sup>21</sup>.

Finally, it is the homeland of obesity. Between 1990-2000 and 2017-2020, the number of overweight residents increased from 30.5% to

<sup>22</sup> 41.9% of the population. Denied by a body mass index equal to or greater than 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, obesity is more than 40% more common among those who have only had a secondary education, but note however that obese American higher educated people are three times more numerous than their French counterparts.

This action does not simply pose a medical problem. Of course, it causes deaths: during the Covid epidemic it, as a risk factor, contributed to America's poor performance. It is, in fact, a risk factor even without Covid. But, beyond the state of the body, it tells us striking things about the mental structure of individuals.

In a society where, despite inequalities, eating poses no difficulty, obesity reveals a lack of self-discipline, all the more clear when it affects the rich who have the means to obtain quality food. We can therefore use the obesity rate (or rather its inverse) as an indicator (among others) of the control that individuals manage to exercise over themselves. The American rate betrays a deficiency of the superego on the scale of society as a whole. Given the figures previously cited, and sticking only to the highly educated, we can have fun calculating a coefficient of thinning of the superego (and therefore of the ego ideal) of three among the Americans compared to the French.

## ***The end of meritocracy: welcome to the oligarchy***

The prosperous and democratic America of the post-war period had converted to the meritocratic ideal. In the general context of expansion of higher education, the barriers established by the WASP to slow down access to university for other ethnoreligious groups, Jews in particular, had been lifted. The motivation of the WASP elites was partly geopolitical. It was necessary to confront the USSR in all areas, scientific as well as ideological. Ideology first: on a moral level, the emancipation of blacks was necessary to confront

communist universalism. Then science: the sending of the first Sputnik into space, in 1957, caused a shock in the United States. Fears spread that the USSR had acquired technological superiority. The last resistance to the meritocratic principle fell: Jews were suddenly needed.

Didn't we owe them the atomic bomb, as the film *Oppenheimer* reminds us ? The *numerus clausus* instituted in the 1920s, which limited the number in the most prestigious universities, was, in practice, abolished; they were admitted, and in large numbers, to Harvard, Princeton and Yale, the three most prestigious establishments of the Ivy League.

James Bryant Conant, president of Harvard from 1933 to 1953, chemist, one of the supervisors of the Manhattan Project (which produced the atomic bomb), is the advocate of meritocratic openness. To enter Harvard, he introduced the use of the *Scholastic Aptitude Tests*, but, pragmatically, while secretly preserving a direct path of access for the children of the rich parents who provided the university funding [23](#).

But here comes the final stage of the decay of American democracy, the end of the meritocratic system, the withdrawal of the upper classes into themselves, the transition to the oligarchic stage. The privileged are tired of playing the game of meritocracy, even if they were winners. The richest, as I have just said, whatever the intellectual level of their offspring, had always been able to buy them places at Harvard, Yale or Princeton. On the other hand, the offspring of the upper middle categories had to undergo, often successfully, the ritual of the SATs. Preparing for these highly effective tests had become such a huge and prosperous industry in the United States that they lost all validity as a measure of intelligence. This preparation assumed that parents and students did not mind the effort and it therefore caused bouts of anxiety in both. So this ordeal was less and less tolerated. In recent years we have witnessed a

reuse, by plates, of the SATs. By disorganizing this procedure admission, Covid provided the pretext to remove it <sup>24</sup>.

The renunciation of the meritocratic principle closes the democratic phase of American history. The top of the social pyramid is stratified, unequal, and we certainly cannot put on the same level, on the one hand, the lawyers, doctors and academics who earn between 400,000 and 500,000 dollars per year, income reduced by the cost of their children's education and medical insurance, and on the other hand the four hundred richest Americans identified by the newspaper *Forbes*. But all these little people constitute the summit of an oligarchic society, in which the oligarchs strictly speaking live surrounded by their dependents, also privileged people. Together, they make fun of the difficulties faced by 90% of their fellow citizens.

It is this liberal oligarchy, wrought with nihilism, and not a liberal democracy, which is leading the West's struggle against Russian authoritarian democracy.

We have known conquering oligarchies in history – in late Republican Rome or in Carthage – but they ruled over reasonably effective societies. The tragedy of the American oligarchy is that it reigns over a decaying and largely active economy, as we will now see.

1. I was, on this issue, impressed and influenced by Ross Douthat's book, *The Decadent Society. How We Became Victims of Our Own Success* (New York, Avid Reader Press, 2020), which addresses the problem of possible decadence in American society. Ross Douthat is the smart conservative columnist for the *New York Times*; it guarantees a pluralism of opinions without equivalent in *Le Monde*, in the French press in general, or even in the *Guardian*. As he is also a film critic, he extends his analysis to the cultural domain and provides a striking insight into the stagnation of American culture. We owe him a wonderful concept, very useful for geopolitics, that of “sustainable decadence”. Noting that the entire world is in decadence, Douthat concludes that the decadent United States could remain viable in a decadent world. I haven't followed it but I remain attracted.

2. Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism*, Gallimard, 1939.



3. In Leo Strauss, *Nihilism and Politics*, Rivages Poche, 2004. This is a lecture given in 1941.

4. Anne Case and Angus Deaton, *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*, Princeton University Press, 2020, p. 42.

5. "Life Expectancy Changes since COVID-19," *Nature Human Behavior*, October 17, 2022.

6. OECD data: <https://data.oecd.org/healthstat/infant-mortality-rates.htm>.

7. A. Case and A. Deaton, *Deaths of Despair*, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

8. Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace. How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2010, p. 82-90.

9. C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, Oxford University Press, 1956 and 2000, p. 60-68. The French translation, published by Maspero, dates from 1969.

10. Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, *The Triumph of Injustice. Wealth, scale evasion and democracy*, Seuil, 2020.

11. R. Putnam and D. Campbell, *American Grace*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

12. Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion. How We Became a Nation of Heretics*, New York, Free Press, 2013.

13. R. Putnam and D. Campbell, *American Grace*, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

14. Nicholas Lemann, *The Big Test. The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. In 1990, the SAT was renamed *the Scholastic Assessment Test*, and in 2005, *the SAT Reasoning Test*.

15. See Wikipedia for detailed chires: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SAT>.

16. Let no one see this, on my part, as an outburst of primary anti-Americanism. In *the Class struggles in France in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (Seuil, 2020), I had noted a similar phenomenon *century* for the primary schools of the Republic.

17. Philip S. Babcock and Mindy Marks, "The Falling Time Cost of College: Evidence from Half a Century of Time Use Data," National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2010.

18. Elizabeth M. Dworak, William Revelle, and David M. Condon, "Looking for Flynn Effects in a Recent Online US Adult Sample: Examining Shifts within the SAPA Project," *Intelligence*, vol. 98, May-June 2023, 101734.

19. Pew Research Center.

20. I owe my full perception of this paralysis to a discussion with Peter Thiel.

21. See *The Violence Project* website : <https://www.theviolenceproject.org>.

22. Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>.

23. Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen. The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale and Princeton*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

**24.** This is evident in Daniel Markovits' book, *The Meritocracy Trap* (Penguin Books, 2019). Markovits is a professor at Yale Law School, at the heart of the system. One might believe that he is criticizing meritocracy on simply moral and just grounds, in the manner of Michael Young. But it in no way calls into question the fact that the selected students deserve it, which can be doubted given the most recent practices. He only suggests that this system alienates them.

## CHAPTER 9

# ***Destroy the American economy***

Between January and June 2023, a cascade of studies revealed that the United States was not capable of producing the weapons that Ukraine needed <sup>1</sup>. These studies did not come from small groups allied to the Kremlin but from various *think tanks* funded by the Pentagon and the State Department. How could the world's leading power find itself in such an absurd situation? In this chapter, we will focus on the reality of the American economy and, in doing so, destroy one of the two largest “GDP” (gross domestic product) on the planet (the other is that of China), to bring it back to something that makes sense. Why not the “PIR”, real domestic product? We will discover America's dependence on the rest of the world and its fundamental fragility.

Before engaging in this radical criticism, however, let us recall, for the sake of balance, some indisputable strong points of the said economy. It is undeniable that, in recent years, the most important innovations have come from Silicon Valley, whose advance in communication and information technologies has considerably strengthened the influence of the United States, if not over the world, at least we have it

seen, on their allies. Also in recent years, we have witnessed their great rebound as producers of oil and especially gas. From 4 million barrels per day in 1940, American oil production increased to 9.6 in 1970, then fell to only 5 million in 2008. In 2019, shortly before the war, it reached, thanks to the *fracking technique*, 12.2 million barrels. Without becoming a significant exporter, the United States ceased to be a net importer of oil. Gas production has passed, as

to it, from 489 billion m<sup>3</sup> per year in 2005 to 934 billion in 2021. In the field of gas, the United States is now the second largest exporter in the world, after Russia. They have become, thanks to the war, the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas, which they can in particular supply to their European allies, brutally weaned off Russian gas. The area of energy has highlighted one of the great oddities of the war: we constantly wonder whether the Americans' goal is to defend Ukraine or to control and exploit their allies, Europeans and East- Asians.

The strong points of the American economy – Gafa and gas, Silicon Valley and Texas – are located at the two poles of the spectrum of human activities: lines of computer code tend towards abstraction, energy is a matter first. The difficulties of the American economy fill the rest of the spectrum: the manufacturing of objects, that is to say industry in the traditional sense of the word. It is a deficiency in the industry that the war has highlighted, through a very banal inability to produce enough 155 shells, the NATO standard. However, we gradually understand that nothing can anymore be produced in sufficient quantities, missiles of all types included.

The war, this great revealer, showed the gap that had widened between the perception we have of America (and that America has of itself) and the reality of its power. In 2022, Russian GDP represented 8.8% of US GDP (and, combined with

**Belarusian GDP, 3.3% of the GDP of the Western camp). How, despite this imbalance in their favor, did the United States come to no longer be able to manufacture enough shells for Ukraine?**

### ***Volatilization of American industry***

**Globalization, orchestrated by America itself, has undermined its industrial hegemony. In 1928, American industrial production represented 44.8% of that of the world; in 2019, it had fallen to 16.8%. At the same time, that of the United Kingdom fell from 9.3% to 1.8%, that of Japan rose from 2.4% to 7.8%, that of Germany decreased by 11%. .6% to 5.3%, that of France plunged from 7% to 1.9%, that of Italy fell from 3.2% to 2.1%. China, in 2020, reached 28.7%. Russia, the fifteenth largest industrial producer, is around 1%. The scarcity of comparative statistics concerning it seems above all to indicate that Russian industry has accomplished what certain American aircraft are trying to achieve, stealth; and we can therefore say that Russia caught the United States cold by developing the absolute weapon against them: the stealth industry.**

**To better assess the “physical” balance of power in the globalized world, we can examine the industry of industry that is the production of machine tools. In 2018, China manufactured 24.8% of the planet's machine tools, the Germanic world 21.1% (Germany, Austria and Switzerland combined, knowing that the bulk of Swiss industry borders the German border), Japan 15.6%, Italy 7.8%, the United States only 6.6%, South Korea 5.6%, Taiwan 5.0%, India 1.4%, Brazil 1, 1%, France 0.9%, the United Kingdom 0.8%. I give up trying to find Russia in the statistics; here it achieves an invisibility which makes us fear the worst.**

America's decline in the production of tangible goods is reflected in agriculture. Following the implementation, in 1994, of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada (NAFTA), American agriculture suffered a

processes of concentration, specialization and decline We cited <sup>2</sup>. wheat production in [Chapter 1](#) : while in Russia it increased from 37 million tonnes in 2012 to 80 million in 2022, it fell in the United States by 65 million tons in 1980 to 47 million in 2022. More generally, while America was a huge (net) exporter of agricultural commodities, it is now just in balance and irte with the

decit <sup>3</sup>. We can imagine that, with a population that continues to grow, it will become seriously deficient over the next ten to twenty years.

## ***The United States PIR***

In the previous paragraphs, we relied on official numbers. The time has come to step over them. The American gross domestic product is in fact made up, in its overwhelming majority, of services to people whose effectiveness or even usefulness cannot always be discerned: doctors (sometimes killers, as we have seen, in the area of opioids) and overpaid lawyers, predatory financiers, prison guards, intelligence agents. In 2020, GDP even included as added value the work of the country's 15,140 economists, the majority of them high priests of lies, with an average annual salary of \$121,000. What is the American GDP worth when we relieve it of the activity of this parasitic mass which does not correspond to a real production of wealth? I am going to propose an exercise that should amuse the reader: deflating GDP using estimates

somewhat free to arrive at a realistic assessment of the wealth produced annually in the United States, the PIR (real, or realistic, domestic product). I will achieve this through a calculation whose audacity and precision should earn me a Nobel Prize. The Royal Bank of Sweden, which has awarded this rattle to so many meticulous comedians, could well for once reward a simple and clear mind.

We saw in the [previous chapter](#) that health spending represented 18.8% of American GDP, leading to a reduction in life expectancy. It seems to me that the real value of these health expenditures, given their results, is overestimated.

Only 40% of the purchased value really exists in these expenses. I will therefore reduce them by multiplying them by the coefficient 0.4.

Let's then return to the American GDP of \$76,000 per capita in 2022. I note that, in this evaluation, 20% correspond to sectors of the economy that I would describe as physical: industry, construction, transport, mining, agriculture. This 20% of 76,000 gives 15,200 dollars which I secure by declaring them "true". That leaves \$60,800 per capita, the "production" of services (including health), which I have no reason to think are more "real" than health itself. I therefore also apply the reduction coefficient of 0.4 to them. My \$60,800 becomes \$24,320. I add the \$15,200 of secure physical production to these \$24,320 of reduced services. I get a per capita PIR of \$39,520. This result is fascinating because in 2020 the PIR per capita was slightly lower than the GDP per capita of Western European countries (for the record, that of Germany was 48,000 dollars and that of France 41,000). How strange: the order of wealth per capita now coincides with that of performance in terms of infant mortality, with Germany at the top and the United States dead last.

## ***Dependence on imported goods***

We noted, at the beginning of [chapter 8](#), the illusion of which even the best American geopoliticians, who perceive their homeland as an island, sheltered from all the misfortunes of the world, are the toys. They forget one of the fundamental characteristics of the United States: the enormous imbalance in its trade balance; they consume much more than they produce.

A country's exchanges in real goods with foreign countries are, after industrial, global or machine tool production, an additional and excellent indicator of its real power.

America lives on a drip of imports which are not covered by exports but by the issuance of dollars. It finances its commercial deficit by issuing Treasury bonds but can only do so because the dollar is the world's reserve currency; it is used for international transactions and also, many times (as we saw in [Chapter 5](#)), for the richest people to hoard their money in tax havens. Without being certain, we can nevertheless estimate that a third of the dollars in circulation are used for this purpose.

Just as it was necessary to strip GDP of its useless or useful services to assess real wealth, if we want to correctly assess the American external deficit, we must take into consideration only goods and leave aside services. So let us continue our critical work. Let us never forget that all these indicators, originally scientific, have been transformed by globalization into instruments of demonstration, seduction, and dissimulation. If we simply look at what the American deficit on trade in goods (services excluded) represents *as a proportion of GDP* (still as active as usual), we get the impression of a stable state: 4.5% deficit in 2000, 4.6% in 2022.

But this rate is obtained thanks to an increase in GDP proportional to that in deficit. And this



**GDP still means nothing. However, let us refrain from evaluating the successive PIRs of the United States because this would require us to carry out a less rigorous calculation than the previous one. It's simpler: we can examine the volume of the trade deficit itself. In raw form, it increased by 173% between 2000 and 2022. Determined by the price index, it increased by 60%.**

**The most striking thing is that the increase in the trade deficit persists despite the official protectionist reorientation of economic policy initiated under Obama, reinforced by Trump and resumed by Biden. This additional mystery will help us understand the irrevocable nature of American decline. Having examined its root causes – the fall of Protestantism, education and civic morality, all phenomena which are hardly reversible – we will not be surprised to find that the economic decline itself does not seem to be reversible. neither.**

## ***Unproductive and predatory meritocrats***

**All economic indicators used until now have concerned the production of goods or foodstuffs. If we want to evaluate the potential of an economy in depth, we must go back upstream to the producers, the people who make things.**

**Because an economy is first and foremost a collection of men and women who have been trained and acquired skills. To find itself unable to produce the shells Ukraine needed, America first had to get rid of the men who made them.**

**An article from *Foreign Affairs*, “How America Broke its War Machine”, tells us that the defense industry, which in the 1980s employed 3.2 million workers, no longer employs any today, after restructuring and concentration. businesses, only 1.1 million. A division by three. The economists**

Americans, these champions of the inversion of reality, would undoubtedly speak here of “consolidation”. But this reduction in workforce, since that is what it is, gives us a concrete indicator of the decline not only material, but human which has hit American industry.

We saw, in [Chapter 1, how the](#) United States, more than twice as populated as Russia, probably trains 33% fewer engineers than Russia. Let’s dig deeper. The meritocratic ideal has turned against American democracy: by vitiating it with an ideal of inequality, it has undermined it. This evidence, of

many authors have noted it <sup>4</sup>. What often escaped them was the way in which the type of studies, and therefore of professional training, chosen by the “deserving” selected by the tests, the SATs, had changed. In the minds of the founding fathers of meritocracy, the main goal was to cope with Soviet competition. The United States needed to recruit the best students in science and technology in order to provide an industry capable of prevailing over that of the communist meritocrats. Conant, the president of Harvard during this period, as we have seen, was a chemist by training and one of the supervisors of the Manhattan Project. However, we have witnessed a rapid drying up of scientific and technical recruitment. Today, among American students, only 7.2% study *engineering*. We can therefore speak of an internal social brain drain: towards law, finance and business schools, all sectors where income can be higher than that of engineering or scientific research.

Economists have not been content to ignore this phenomenon; in a hurry to demonstrate that everything was for the best in the best of all possible worlds (and especially in theirs, the University and the employers' *think tanks* most often), they concocted an absurd interpretation of the higher remuneration from which the educated benefited higher in general (compared to those in secondary education, who are often Trumpist). Noting that those who

those who studied more had better incomes, these smart people considered that these incomes measured an effective contribution of education, an improvement in human capital. It did not occur to them that higher studies in law, finance or commerce, without causing any improvement in the productive or even intellectual capacities of the individuals concerned, nevertheless gave them, as a result of their social position, a superior capacity to *prey* on the wealth produced by the system. Let's summarize: the higher incomes of the most educated reflect the fact that lawyers, bankers and so many other tertiary sector hideouts are, in packs, excellent predators. Here then is the ultimate perversion to which the development of education has resulted: the multiplication of graduates creates a multitude of parasites. If the French reader wants to scare himself and wonder why his country is becoming poorer, instead of bellowing against civil servants or against immigrants, he only has to meditate on the number of students in business schools, management, accounting and sales, the number of which increased from 16,000 in 1980 to 239,000 in 2021-2022.

## ***Dependence on imported workers***

To compensate for their lack of scientific and technical workers at all levels, what we call ***STEM workers*** there (for “ **science, *technology, engineering or mathematics* ”**), the United States imports them massively. In 2000, foreign-born people made up 16.5% of this entire category. In 2019, the proportion rose to 23.1%, or 2.5 million imported workers, of whom 28.9% (or 722,500) were Indians.

There were also 273,000 Chinese, 100,000 Vietnamese and 119,000 Mexicans. Of course, these imported foreigners are more qualified than their American equivalents. Among ***STEM workers***

born in the United States, 67.3% had a BA (bachelor's degree) but 86.5% among immigrants <sup>5</sup>.

Some other figures: among *software developers*, we count 39% foreigners; among engineers, depending on the sector, 15, 20 or 25%; and 30% among physicists. In California, foreigners represent 39% of *STEM workers*.

In a sense, this capture of talent from elsewhere is the very history of America. From 1840 to 1910, the massive arrival of German and Scandinavian immigrants, often educated and carrying dynamism specific to the original family, accompanied the rise late but rapid industrial development of the country. This call abroad however, against the backdrop of an educational dynamic of the WASP themselves. The host population also produced workers qualified, technicians and engineers (few large scientific, however). From now on these come to compensate for educational environment, not only of the WASP, but of the entire white American population.

TABLE 3

The ten countries receiving the most doctorates between 2001 and 2020 in the United States

	All areas	Science and engineering	Engineering	Proportion engineering on all
China	88,512	81,803	30,599	35%
India	36,565	34,241	14,397	39%
South Korea	25,994	19,781	8,023	31%
Taiwan	12,648	9,765	3,418	27%
Canada	9,027	6,399	1,060	12%
Türkiye	8,887	7,372	3,104	35%
Iran	7,338	6,949	4,834	66%
Thailand	5,166	4,494	1,701	33%

Japan	4,121	3,100	479	12%
Mexico	4,089	3,451	912	22%

(Source: National Science Foundation)

**The difference in inclination between foreigners and Americans for scientific and technical studies is noticeable within universities. These, as we know, welcome a large number of foreign students. Table 3 presents two significant features in the years 2001-2020: first the importance of China and India among the countries which provide doctoral students to American universities; then the high proportion of future engineers among these foreign students. This is crucial information regarding the interest that source countries have in technology and industry. In this table, I award the first prize in sociology of motivations to Iranian doctoral students for the rate of 66% following engineering studies. We therefore understand why since the start of the war in Ukraine, Iran has been exporting military drones to Russia.**

**In this geopolitical book, I strive to approach the foundations of power. The number of engineers must take us further than the production of weapons and, again, things towards men. A modern army is held together by its technical capabilities and these are not reduced to its engineering corps. The majority of its officers, especially in the technical arms of aviation and the navy, are in fact engineers. The fact that the United States is incapable of training them in large numbers casts doubt on what the real potential of the American army would be in the event of a major conflict. Air Force and Navy are historically the most successful branches, with particular mention, since the Pacific War, for naval aviation. It is therefore at its heart that the brain drain to law and business schools threatens American military power. You don't win a war by sending your opponent**

orders to pay or by blocking their accounts. Hey, this sentence gives me a feeling of déjà vu: freezing of the assets of the Bank of Russia and seizure of the property of Russian oligarchs (and simple Russian nationals, in violation of the right to property so revered in the West), finally refusal to insure ships carrying Russian oil. On the American side, it is the minds of the lawyers who are waging the war. And Ukraine is short of shells.

## ***The incurable dollar disease***

Foresight is not simply about being able to perceive a decline. In the case of the United States, the exercise would be almost too easy; this is to ensure whether the process is reversible or not.

For those who are not convinced by the hypothesis of a zero religion, which excludes any “awakening”, I will add an economic sequence which also implies that the decline is not reversible. I started it above by emphasizing the fact that the trade deficit continues to increase despite neoprotectionist measures.

Another economic awareness produces no effect in the United States. Since the Great Recession of 2007-2008, America has known – across all classes – that rising inequality leads to growing economic instability and a decline in living standards. In 2011, the “Occupy Wall Street” movement identified the adversary, financial capitalism. In 2013, the publication in the United States of Thomas Piketty's book, *Capital*

*in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, whose thesis is that the rise of inequalities is inexorable if politics does not get involved (or war, of political origin), proved to be a phenomenal success. But as in the case of the commercial situation, no alteration in the course of economic events was observed. The Gini index, which varies between 0

and 1, is all the higher the greater the inequality. It continues to increase in the United States. In 1993, it was 0.454; in 2006, on the eve of the Great Recession, 0.470; in 2021, about ten years after this one, it reached 0.494. Like a horseman of the Apocalypse, inequality continues on its way.

Why can't the American ship turn things around?

Reduce inequalities and the commercial gap, redirect students towards engineering and science fields? Leaving aside the religious basis of this impotence (zero morality), we can also identify a purely economic barrier which prevents action. America, in fact, produces the world's currency, the dollar, and its ability to extract monetary wealth from nothing is paralyzing it. We are certainly not very far from zero morality here, but we can analyze this mechanism in a purely technical way – without invoking God or morality.

We know *Dutch disease*, also called the “natural resource curse”, which is often linked to oil or gas. The abundance of a natural resource in a country and its export increase the value of the currency, the strength of which then handicaps the development of other sectors of the economy. Let's say that America suffers from a “super *Dutch disease*”. The “natural” resource that hinders its economy is the dollar. Producing the world's currency, at minimal or no cost, makes all activities other than monetary creation unprofitable, and therefore unattractive.

The money created does not come out of a money printing press operated by the Fed. As Ann Pettifor noted in the introduction to a very relevant book, only 5% of monetary production is

the fact of the Central Bank <sup>6</sup>. The remaining 95% results from loans that banks consent to individuals or agree among themselves. If there is a crisis, however, the Fed, to save the system, will issue more money, as it did in 2008, ensuring that money creation by banks and individuals, in fact by the State, is limitless. Absence of limits also for debt

American public sector whose legal ceiling is, whenever necessary, raised by Congress. At regular intervals, in fact, America plays a budgetary comedy on us: the Republicans threaten the Democrats not to raise the debt ceiling if the latter do not agree to reduce this or that social expenditure. Subjects of the Empire, go in peace, the debt ceiling will be raised, dollars and Treasury bonds will continue to be issued and the privileged of the planet will continue to buy them. These dollars in fact have the particularity of existing for the rest of the world. Coming out of a nap, my mind foggy but free, I find myself fantasizing about a Biden who would send a few billion dollars to the Ukrainian leaders so that they can do their shopping in Western Europe. Let's be reasonable: such a thing cannot exist between American and European allies...

Difficult to amend such a system: it is so much easier to produce money than goods. And the beautiful profession will of course be the one that brings its possessor closer to monetary creation, to the source of opulence: banker, scalist lawyer, lobbyist in the banker's service, etc. The engineer is too far from this prodigal source, the industrialist lives with the obligation to achieve a profit rate of, let's say, 15%, set by the people who make money...

Protection at the borders against Foreign industry cannot be sure if real competition comes from an internal, collective and demonic printing press. The mechanism has repercussions, in anticipation, on young people who choose training and careers. If a banker and a lawyer earn so much more, why engage in difficult scientific or technical studies?

This explains what we observed above: the brain drain towards unproductive professions. We prefer to study law, finance or commerce, because, by

they, we will get closer to the sacred fountains from which the dollar <sup>7</sup> springs



**1.** For example, Samuel Charap and Miranda Priebe, “Avoiding a Long War: US Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict,” Rand Corporation, January 2023.

Michael Brenes, “Privatization and the Hollowing Out of the US Defense Industry,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 3, 2023.

**2.** Mark V. Wetherington, *American Agriculture. From Farm Families to Agribusiness*, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2021, p. 149-171.

**3.** See the article by Will Snell, “US Agriculture Flirting with an Annual Trade Deficit – First Time in 60 years? », dated October 29, 2020 and published on the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment website: <https://agecon.ca.uky.edu/us-agriculture-irting-annual-trade-decit-%E2%80%93rst-time-60-years.>

**4.** In addition to the works mentioned in [chapter 8](#), we can cite Michael J. Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020, and Will Bunch, *After the Ivory Tower Falls. How College Broke the American Dream and Blew up our Politics and How to Fix It*, New York, William Morrow, 2022.

**5.** American Immigration Council.

**6.** Ann Pettifor, *The Production of Money. How to Break the Power of Bankers*, London, Verso, 2017, p. 3.

**7.** I owe this idea of a feedback of economic specializations on university training to my colleague Philippe Laforge.

## CHAPTER 10

### *The Washington gang*

Our overall, albeit schematic, picture of American society and the economy is complete. Its regressive dynamics have been identified. We will now examine with a magnifying glass and with the eye of an anthropologist the group of individuals who, concretely, conduct the foreign policy of the sick power that America has become. Who is this tribe with singular morals which, through its tastes and its decisions, has led the West to the gates of Russia? We most often study a primitive community in its natural environment: this will be the city of Washington. We will be particularly interested in *the American geopolitical establishment*, which is colloquially called the “Blob”, after the name of a worrying micro-organism.

### *The end of the WASP*

The WASP power elite dear to C. Wright Mills has disappeared; To realize this, he knew how to look at the administration

current American. Among its most important figures, those leading the war in Ukraine in particular, not a single WASP.

Joe Biden is of Irish Catholic origin; Jake Sullivan, his Security Advisor, too; Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State, that is to say the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is of Jewish origin; Victoria Nuland, Undersecretary of State for Europe and Eurasia (and therefore Ukraine), was born to a Jewish father and a mother of British origin; Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin is black and Catholic.

If black people are heavily overrepresented in American prisons, with 40% of inmates, they are also in the Biden cabinet. While the U.S. population is 13% Black, Biden's cabinet is 26%. Blacks constitute 13.3% of the members of the House of Representatives (racially representative, therefore) and only 3% of the senators (in an institution designed to slow down History, this is normal). Outside of political institutions *stricto sensu*, there are 6.4% blacks among journalists and barely 0.5% among the super-rich (among the four hundred richest Americans, only two are black). But among political leaders, we find in Washington the colorful atmosphere of London.

The future of the ruling classes can be read in the universities. Let us examine the origins of students within the three most prestigious of them: Harvard, Yale and Princeton, the holy places where the future oligarchy is formed. If Whites still make up 61% of the American population, they only represent 46% of students within the *Big Three*. As in the United Kingdom, we therefore measure an under-representation which announces the coming evanescence of the predominance of Whites in the intellectual domain.

Blacks, however, remain slightly underrepresented: their 13.3% in the general population corresponds to only 10% of them at Yale, Harvard and Princeton. Same configuration for Latinos, who now constitute 20% of the general population but only 16% of students in the three major

universities. One category compensates for all the under-representations and therefore reveals a spectacular over-representation, that of Asians: 6% of the population but 28% of students at major universities.

The eradication of WASPs at the government level was not intended. A Republican administration, even a Trumpist one, would make them reappear, but with zero Protestantism. We would then be dealing with pseudo-WASP. Besides, Biden, in everyone's mind, is only American and white, nothing more. His Irish Catholic origins don't count. When Kennedy became the first Catholic president in the history of the United States, it was an event, a turning point. Nothing of the sort here: the complete absence of WASPs in Biden's entourage and the fact that he himself is not one interests no one.

The explanation of the phenomenon is simple. The zero state of religion has swept away not only religious differences, but also those of race and education. What is the difference between a zero Catholic and a zero Protestant? What a difference between a white person and a black person in an atmosphere of zero Protestantism, and therefore – let us push our new terminology as far as possible – of zero damnation. The vaporization of Protestantism led to the vaporization of traditional American racism, so linked to this religious belief.

The over-representation of Asians at universities is not the result of reverse racism but of their superior educational dynamism. The disappearance of Protestantism, with its educational demands and its cult of effort, against the anthropological background of an absolute nuclear family which provides little supervision for its children, devastated the educational capacities of the white population. It brought together the descendants of Protestants and Catholics in the same decline in the level recorded by the SATs and by the average intelligence quotient. The children of Japanese, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants, on the other hand, were protected, for one or two generations, from this shipwreck, not only by authoritarian family structures, but also by tradition.

Confucian tradition which sanctifies education, a tradition itself founded on family transmission<sup>1</sup>. We observed the same phenomenon in the United Kingdom and it has its equivalent in France.

Let's avoid any misunderstanding. As in the case of the United Kingdom, we must first salute the prodigious historical achievement marked by the end of distinctions between Catholics and Protestants and, even more, between Whites and Blacks. Secondly, however, we must ask ourselves what the disappearance of the WASPs means sociologically.

The death of the power elite, in a climate of zero morality, was accompanied by the disappearance of any ethos common to the ruling group. The WASP elite indicated direction, moral objectives, good or bad. The current ruling group (I dare not call it elite) offers no such thing. All that remains within it is a dynamic of pure power which, projected onto the outside world, has mutated into a preference for military power and war. I will return to this crucial point in more detail. I must first introduce the few basic sociological elements that will be necessary for me to situate the role that Jews play within the Biden administration in the design of American foreign policy.

### ***Disappearance of Jewish intelligence?***

I would like to point out first of all, to avoid another misunderstanding, that I myself am of Jewish, Breton and English origin, and very satisfied with these three origins.

Jews make up 1.7% of the American population. We found a much higher proportion among members of the Biden administration, particularly among those involved in foreign policy. The same overrepresentation

is observed in the *Board of Directors* of the most prestigious foreign policy *think tank*, the Council on Foreign Relations: almost a third of its thirty-four members are Jewish. In 2010, the *Forbes* ranking showed that, among the top hundred fortunes in the United States, there were 30% Jews. We have the impression of being in Budapest at the beginning of the 1930s. The interpretation of this fact is also the same: in order to explain a strong over-representation of Jews in the upper categories of a given society, we must first look for, and more often than not finding, an educational weakness in the general population, which allowed the educational intensity of the Jewish religion to be fully manifested. This condition, as we have seen, is perfectly met by present-day America, as it was by central and eastern Europe from the 1800s to the 1930s. The relative importance of Jews in the United States, until recently, is one of the effects of the decline in the educational concern of Protestants. Deprived of Protestant competition, Jewish insistence on education was able to produce in America from 1965 to 2010 the same kind of massive effect that it had produced in central and

poorly literate oriental people of the 19th<sup>e</sup> century.

century. History, however, continues, particularly that of Judaism in the United States. The rise in educational power of Asian Americans put an end to the competitive vacuum of the years 1965-2010.

A striking article in the online magazine *Tablet* (a Jewish magazine) shows how the current trend today is to

the erasure of the centrality of Jews in the United States<sup>2</sup>

The title of the article, "The Vanishing", dated 1<sup>er</sup> March 2023 and signed Jacob Savage, is rather catastrophic. The author notes that "in the academic world, in Hollywood, in Washington and even in New York, wherever American Jews had managed to impose themselves, their influence is in clear decline." A series of very striking examples illustrates his point: among boomers, Jews

represented 21% of academics at top institutions; among those under 30, they only represent 4%; they now provide only 7% of the students at Ivy League universities, in other words less than the 10% maximum quota once imposed on them by the *numerus clausus* lifted at the end of the 1950s. “Harvard went from 25% of Jews in the 1990s and 2000s to less than 10% today,” laments Savage.

The decline is hitting spheres other than the University: “In New York, the seat of political power for American Jews, there are almost no Jews left in power. Ten years ago, the city had five Jewish members of Congress, a Jewish mayor, two Jewish borough presidents and 14 Jewish members of the city council. Today, there are only two members of Congress and one borough president remaining. Only six Jews sit on the city council, which has 51 members. » Historically, Savage tells us, Jews were also overrepresented among federal judges. While they only form 2.5% of the population (for me 1.7%, but I prefer not to alter its comparative series; the definition of who is or is not Jewish is always debatable), they counted at least 20% of federal judges. However, among the one hundred and fourteen judges appointed by Biden at the time this article was written, only eight or nine were Jewish (so 7 or 8%, which would still be an overrepresentation).

Same decline in Hollywood, in fact: apart from a few vestiges of another time, like Steven Spielberg, James Gray or Jerry Seinfeld, there are hardly any great directors, nor even great screenwriters of Jewish origin. The text concludes with a reflection which, in the current context, takes on a particular flavor: “If Putin or Orban reduced the Jewish population of their universities by 50%, the ADL [Anti-Defamation League, an NGO which helps Jews to fight against discrimination] would raise loud cries. But Harvard and Yale

can magically lose almost half of their Jewish students in less than ten years, and we remain silent. »

Savage denounces the return of discrimination against Jews. I don't believe it for a moment. I don't see at all why white people would start preferring Asians. The most likely interpretation is that, long benefited by a religion very favorable to education, American Jews ultimately assimilated so well that they were sucked into American religious and intellectual decline. Their assimilation is measurable by the rate of mixed marriages: Jews married before 1980 were married to a non-Jew in only 18% of cases. Among those who married between 2010 and 2020, ethnoreligious exogamy was already 61%.

I doubt that the American decline has spared the 39% of endogamous couples that remain. I spoke of zero Protestantism, then of zero Catholicism; why not conceive, in the case of the United States (and elsewhere), a zero Judaism? The concept would be useful in analyzing possible educational decline among the Jews themselves.

I have cited this article extensively because it opens up an innovative field of reflection. I admit, however, that I only have relative confidence in the figures he reports and in his conclusions. And in any case, in the current leadership group, and particularly in the faction dedicated to the war, Americans of Jewish origin are still over-represented – and stunted in peaking careers.

## ***A village called Washington***

As Eric Kaufmann noted, in *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America*, the American WASPs, who deliberately emancipated Catholics, Jews, Asians, Latinos and Blacks, are in History one of the rare imperial ruling classes which carried out its own dissolution to produce



news that can be described as universal as, in <sup>3</sup>. We hardly see Antiquity, the Roman ruling class.

Kaufmann finds this admirable and, I repeat, in a universal moral sense, he is right. The problem lies at another level. The United States had been led, between 1945 and 1965, by a homogeneous, coherent elite united by personal ties; it preserved what Protestantism had that was good and controlled what it had that was bad; she submitted, like the rest of the population, to a common morality, she accepted military service, the blood tax, and taxes in general; it pursued a responsible foreign policy focused on the defense of freedom, except, it must be remembered, in Latin America, the backyard of the United States, where these evil instincts incurably and everywhere present in the world could be expressed. man. Today, the village of Washington is nothing more than a collection of individuals completely devoid of common morals.

I don't talk about "village" by chance. If a group of individuals is no longer united by a belief of national or universal scope, if it is anomic in the sense of atomized, what we observe is a purely local mechanism for regulating beliefs and acts. In [Chapter 4](#), I mentioned the fragile superegos of individuals that no collective belief, society or "ego ideal" structures or frames. These weak individuals are driven by a mimetic regulatory mechanism internal to the group to which they belong locally or professionally. I could cite as examples, in France, a suburb which votes for the National Rally, a poor district of Marseille, the profession of journalism or the Macron government. Everywhere the atomization of advanced individualist societies induces centripetal drifts of place and/or profession. But this is about Washington and its leadership group. Beyond the glorious lowering of barriers of race and religion, let's imagine whites, blacks, Jews, Asians all wriggling together in the bath of money and power in Washington. In fact, these individuals

only exist in relation to each other; they no longer determine their actions and decisions by referring to external and, above all, superior values: religious, moral, historical. Their only consciousness is local, village. The observation is very worrying: the individuals who make up the ruling group of the greatest world power no longer obey a system of ideas which transcends it but react to impulses coming from the local network to which they belong.

## ***Anthropology of the Blob***

So far I have mainly referred to Washington in general. Let's come to *the geopolitical establishment*. We are fortunate, concerning him, to have an exceptional book by Stephen Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions. America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of US Primacy* <sup>4</sup>. Walt, as I said, is, with Mearsheimer, a eminent representative of realism in geopolitics. Together they wrote a book on the Israeli lobby <sup>5</sup>. While Mearsheimer teaches at the University of Chicago, a creative and often misguided university, to the right or to the left, and which is not part of the Ivy League, Walt is professor at Harvard, more precisely at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. He can look down on *the geopolitical establishment*.

We find in his book a development entitled “ Life in the “*Blob*”. A sense of community ”, which one would say was written by an anthropologist rather than a geopolitician. Walt describes the “*Blob*”, a nickname coined by Ben Rhodes, a former Obama adviser, to designate the microcosm responsible for foreign policy. The name designates a single-celled organism with a slimy appearance that is found in the forest, where it multiplies in

**absorbing the bacteria and fungi that surround it. He is brainless.**

**The Washingtonian Blob as presented by Walt corresponds entirely to my vision of a ruling group devoid of intellectual or ideological ties external to itself. Walt notes that although some of its members have had good studies, this is far from being an essential criterion for being part of it. Above all, he highlights a decisive development: people who previously devoted themselves to foreign policy had often been trained in other disciplines and had made careers outside this field: "lawyers, bankers, academics, businessmen", they had entered it with general views and concerns.**

**This is no longer true of the people of the Blob, who, with a few exceptions, even when they change positions and, apparently, professions, never leave their corral. Walt uses the example of former US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power, who became known as a journalist and human rights activist and taught at Harvard (at the same John F. Kennedy to which Walt belongs) before joining Barack Obama's campaign team then becoming, in 2009, his "special advisor in charge of multilateralism". In 2013, she was appointed ambassador. Following Trump's rise to power, she returned to Harvard. "Her roles have changed, but she has never stopped 'doing foreign policy,'" Walt concludes. His book was published in 2018 and subsequent years have confirmed his diagnosis. From January 2021 and the return of Democrats to the White House, Samantha Power found herself catapulted by Biden to head of USAID, the United States Agency for International Development.**

**The major perverse effect of this confinement to the "international" is that it predisposes to activism. "They have a clear personal interest in the United States having an ambitious global policy," Walt explains. The busier the U.S. government is outside, the more positions there are to fill**

Among international policy experts, the greater the share of national wealth devoted to solving these global problems, the greater their potential influence. »

Hence a propensity to ignore threats and an obsession with military power. There is a (professional) interest in making things hot!

Walt confirms here what I noticed above: in a world where ideologies are withering away, the State of course survives, but even more so the professions. The Blob is not the only one to blame. Journalists, who once adhered to opposing ideologies, have become "Journalism", with its own ethics and concerns, with also, let us note, its own preference for war, because it is spectacle. Same pattern for the police or the army.

In his description of the Blob, Walt shows the overlapping of its members, who often circulate there on the fringes of parties. As in any narrow environment, in any village, we see couples forming and marriages concluding. A particularly central example: the Kagan family. Let's start with Robert Kagan, the most agitated and violent of the neoconservative ideologues. He is one of the sons of the military historian Donald Kagan and the brother of the also military historian Frederick Kagan, another son of Donald. They all went through Yale. Robert, therefore, writes books, in which he praises the contribution of

the military instrument for the planetary vitality of democracy <sup>6</sup>It began by supporting the Republican administration of Bush (the promoter of the Iraq war) before supporting the imperial democrats (in the Ukrainian war). Robert Kagan is the happy husband of Victoria Nuland, the aforementioned deputy secretary of state, who devoted her time to Europe and Ukraine. She stood out in 2014 with a sharp warning delivered over the phone: " Fuck *the EU!* " That's not all. Robert Kagan's sister-in-law, Frederick's wife Kimberly Kagan, founded and directs the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). It's this same *think tank*,

direct emanation of neoconservatism, which develops the maps on the Ukrainian war piously reproduced in the newspaper *Le Monde* and elsewhere, where they are presented to us as coming from an independent and reliable source.

I am aware that the notion of the *deep state*, whose followers search the depths of the state apparatus for secret governing bodies, is extremely popular. I'm not from this school. On the contrary, I propose to found a "school of the shallow state" (the *shallow state* ?). State apparatuses exist in the United States, where the army, navy, Air Force, CIA, NSA are gigantic and cold machines. But they are populated by individuals who, for the most part, respect the hierarchical principle. These bureaucratic monsters are ridden by the small band of semi-intellectuals who inhabit the Blob, a sub-village of Washington.

## ***Take revenge on Ukraine?***

It remains for me to mention, to close this chapter, a question, a doubt. Reconstructing the trajectories of American actors in the war, I was surprised to note the frequency of Jewish ancestors coming from the Empire of the Tsars and its margins.

We noted that the two most influential figures "managing" Ukraine, Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State, and Victoria Nuland, the Deputy Secretary of State, are of Jewish origin. More specifically, we discover that Blinken is on his mother's side of Hungarian Jewish origin and that his paternal grandfather was born in Kyiv. Victoria Nuland's father's side is a combination of Moldovan and Ukrainian Jews. Let's move on to the ideological background, Victoria's in-laws, the Kagans. Robert and Frederick's father Donald was born in Lithuania. That in the high geopolitical *establishment* so many people have a family connection

with the western part of the former Empire of the Tsars does not fail to trouble.

I know from experience that a foreign family origin, however distant, can create a mental link with a region of the world. Oblatt Lajos, my Jewish great-grandfather from Budapest, appears, in the history of my family, only in a state of abstraction; for me it is just a name. Still, my first book, which announced the fall of the Soviet system, was born from a trip to Hungary, where I was drawn to this tenuous family memory.

I therefore completely understand that for Blinken and Nuland, much more direct, much more real links make Ukraine and Russia fully exist.

The parodic neo-Nazism of Ukrainian nationalism (which I spoke about in [chapter 2](#), with moderation, it seems to me) does not, however, embarrass them the way it embarrasses the Israelis, who remember Ukraine as the place the official birthplace of “Russian” anti-Semitism, with the pogroms of 1881-1882. A tenderness of Jews of Hungarian origin for Hungary, yes, I can imagine it, especially since I have often observed it. An affection of Jews of Ukrainian origin for Ukraine, no. I see two possible interpretations of the indifference to the past on the part of Blinken and Nuland.

First the most likely. The zero state of religion is also a zero state of memory. A complete lack of historical awareness could explain why Ukraine's past bothers neither Blinken nor Nuland. These two political leaders would themselves be nothing more than Americans without memory, absolutely irrelevant to Ukraine's anti-Semitic past and the symbolic neo-Nazism of current Ukrainian nationalism. Only the greatness of the American Empire would inspire them.

Another interpretation would be more distressing, and especially for the Ukrainians. This war, if it has the advantage, in the dreams of the neoconservatives, of wearing down Russia demographically, will in no way contribute, whatever its outcome, to consolidating the

Ukrainian nation but to destroy it. At the end of September 2023, the Ukrainian military police surrounded the country with barbed wire to prevent able-bodied men, sickened by the useless and murderous counter-offensive of the summer, demanded by Washington, from fleeing to Romania or Poland. to escape conscription. Whatever ? Why would the Americans of Ukrainian Jewish origin who, with the government in kyiv, co-pilot this butchery not feel this as a just punishment inflicted on this country which made their ancestors smile so much? We will read their Memoirs with interest, if they write one one day.

This speculative dive completes our examination of America. The time has come to reconnect with the totality and reality of the world, to understand why the majority, outside the West, want a Russian victory.

1. Stem family among the Japanese and Koreans, community among the Chinese and Vietnamese (“stem” nuance in the south-east of China and north of Vietnam, “nuclear” nuance in the south of Vietnam).

2. I thank again Peter Thiel who brought this fact and the article to my attention.

3. Eric Kaufmann, *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America*, Harvard University Press, 2004.

4. London, Picador, 2018.

5. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Pro-Israel Lobby and Politics American foreigner*, La Découverte, 2007.

6. Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2003): Europeans are jerks; *The Jungle Grows Back. America and Our Imperiled World* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2018): Europeans are fascists. In any case, the American army will teach them real life.

## CHAPTER 11

### ***Why did the Rest of the world choose Russia***

As early as 1979, Christopher Lasch had placed narcissism at the heart of American culture (*The Culture of Narcissism*) I said, <sup>1</sup>. Everything that in previous chapters, of the atomization of advanced societies, of the dwarf individual born from the collapse of religion and ideologies, could not be considered as an extension of the work of Lasch, whose reading had so impressed me. But the concept of narcissism has an even broader application: it not only accounts for internal phenomena in Western societies, it also allows us to understand their foreign policy. It is striking, in fact, to note to what extent the West, since the start of this crisis, both its American branch and its European branch, is convinced, against all objective reality, that it is still the center of the world. or, better still, that it represents the whole of it. Russian Russia aside, all recent nations would admire its values.

The West seems to have gone wrong somewhere between 1990 and 2000, between the fall of the Berlin Wall and a brief moment of



power. More than thirty years have passed since the fall of communism and it is clear that, for the rest of the world, now, particularly since the Great Recession of 2007-2008, it has ceased to be an admirable victor. The globalization he unleashed is fading, his arrogance is exasperating. Western narcissism, the blindness that follows, has become one of Russia's major strategic assets.

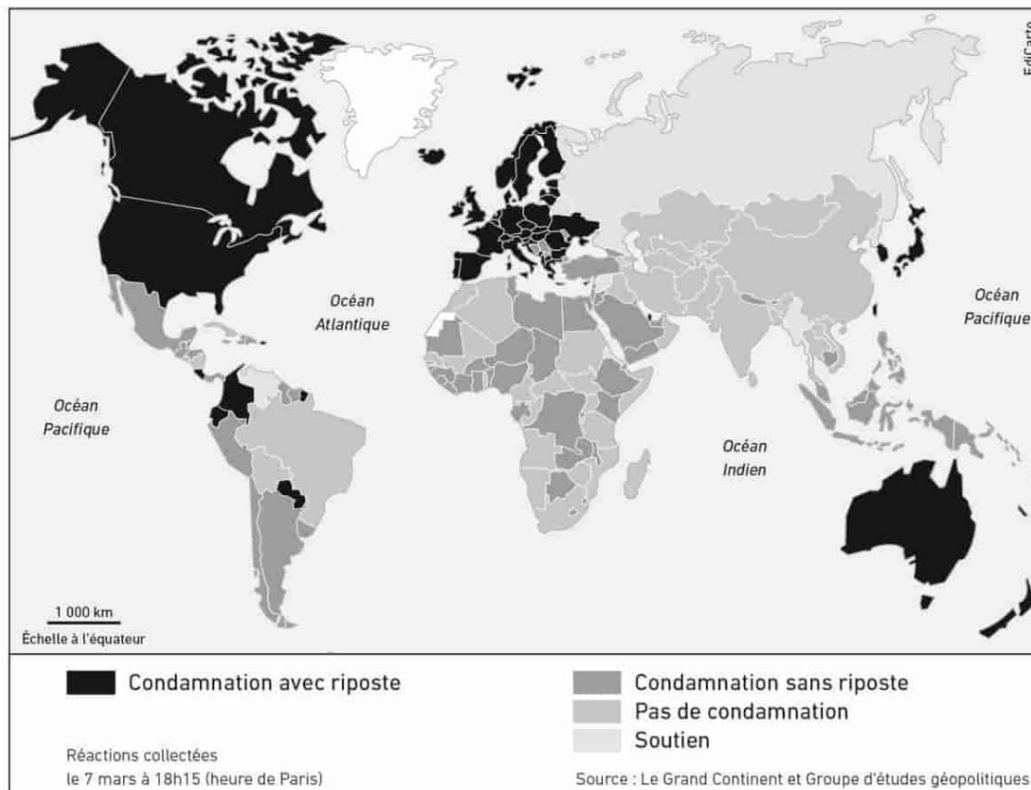
## ***Who wants to punish the big bad Russia?***

The map produced by the Geopolitical Studies Group on March 7, 2022, on the reactions of states to the invasion of Ukraine, provides a global representation of Western narcissism. It indicates which countries have really, actively condemned Russia by accepting the principle of sanctions (“condemnation with response”). We measure the isolation of the West. Only North America, Europe, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador and Paraguay condemned Russia “with response”. If we put aside the four countries of Latin America, all tiny except the anarchic and dynamic Colombia, the Western sphere only brings together the allies or military protectorates of the United States. The countries that have actively supported Russia form a rather unsavory bloc from a democratic perspective: Venezuela, Eritrea, Burma, Syria and North Korea. Let us not draw any conclusions from this in terms of values. “We choose our enemies, we do not choose our allies,” said Raymond Aron. The sovereignist ideal that Russia advocates justifies all alliances, until the recent honeymoon between it and North Korea. Russia is militarily besieged. At the risk of shocking, I would happily apply, to understand Vladimir Putin's attitude towards Kim Jong-un, guardian of North Korea's lineage totalitarianism, Churchill's formula to justify his

**alliance with Stalin, this other butcher: "If Hitler invaded hell, I  
would at least make a favorable reference to the devil at the  
Communal room <sup>2</sup>  
. »**

**Map 11.1**

**ATTITUDE OF STATES ON MARCH 7, 2022 IN FAVOR OR NOT OF  
SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA**



The countries which formally condemned Russia “without response” had not really chosen their side. Most striking is the mass of countries that have simply not condemned. It includes Brazil, India, China and South Africa, four countries which constitute, with Russia, the Brics. Refractory to American economic domination, this group was founded in 2009 (South Africa joined it in 2011) in the turmoil of the Great Recession, which revealed to the world the economic irresponsibility of the West. The American *subprime* crisis was for these countries, deprived but growing, a staggering matter: why grant poor people real estate loans at high rates, when we know that they will not be able to repay them? Morality

zero, when you hold us... The irresponsibility of the United States was quickly added to that of Europe, so slow to react. In truth, it was China which, through a massive recovery policy, pulled the world out of recession. The emergence of the BRICS responded to this double Western irresponsibility. As a consequence of this war which was to isolate Russia, this group expanded, with the admission in August 2023, at the Johannesburg summit, of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and Argentina.

The sanctioned West represents only 12% of the world's population. The Brics therefore include India, now the most populous country, China, the second most populous country, both located on the most populous continent, Asia. Brazil, for its part, is the most populous and powerful country in Latin America: it was for a long time an ally of the United States before becoming its main opponent on the American continent, Mexico having followed an opposite trajectory since, since the NAFTA agreement, it has become an industrial satellite from its main opponent. Finally, South Africa is, by far, the most powerful country in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Western camp, however, continued to think and act as if it were still the master of the world and its media insisted on making it, all by itself, the “international community”.

We are living in Europe and the United States a great moment of subjective moral superiority. However, one of the fashionable historiographical themes today is slavery, which Europeans and Americans shamefully practiced on a large scale.

18th century scale <sup>e</sup> in the middle of the 19th century <sup>e</sup> century, an abomination for which we must atone. Yes, it was an abomination and, yes, we must atone for it. But it is almost surreal to see this theme growing and spreading while we are witnessing, at the same time, a resurgence of the feeling that the West has moral superiority. We can resolve the paradox: our moral superiority is such that it also allows us to criticize ourselves.

**Only our remorse counts. As for external humanity, in our eyes it never really exists.**

**The most astonishing thing, in the months following the start of the war, was the expectation towards China, as expressed by our media and our governments. I mentioned this astonishing and central element in the introduction. In the spirit of justice and charity, I will not name anyone. The attitude of the West combined blindness and stupidity. Current commentators have maintained the absurd idea that Russia's intrusion into Ukraine upset China and that the latter was even hesitating between supporting and punishing it. This disconnection from reality would make it necessary to call a psychiatrist, perhaps a geopsychiatrist. For at least a decade, the United States has designated China as its main adversary, before Russia. The leaders of the Chinese Communist Party know that if Russia falls, then it will be their turn. That in such a context the small world of NATO should have considered joining China is, strictly speaking, astonishing. This delusion (this is the appropriate technical term) presupposes two conditions. Firstly, the frightening absence of minimal geopolitical intelligence among our leaders and journalists; then a presumption so colossal that one suspects it of being tainted with racism. Expecting China to align with the West against Russia assumed that Xi Jinping and his entourage were simpletons and implied, again, that the white man is obviously a superior being.**

**The blindness of Westerners having been established, I will give in this chapter what I consider to be a more realistic representation of the world, by showing why the "Rest of the world", as we sometimes say in the Americanosphere to designate the non- Oquest (with a play on words: “ *The West against the Rest* ”), did not mobilize to support the West. Better, I will explain why this “Rest of the world” began to wish that Russia would win and, noting that it had absorbed the first shock well, gradually committed itself to its side. The reality of the world is double**

antagonism, economic and anthropological, which pits the “Rest” against the West.

– Economic antagonism arises from the simple fact that globalization has proven to be nothing more than a re-colonization of the world by the West, this time under American rather than British leadership. The exploitation of less advanced peoples (the extraction of surplus value, Marxists would say) was more discreet but much more effective than in the years 1880-1914.

– Anthropological antagonism results from the existence in the majority of “Rest” countries of family structures and kinship systems opposed to those of the West.

Russia lives from its natural resources and its labor; in no way does it intend to impose its values on the world. Moreover, it would not have the means to economically exploit the “Rest”, nor to export its culture there. Faced with an America that lives off the labor of the “Rest” and boasts a nihilistic culture, Russia generally appeared preferable to the “Rest”. The Soviet Union had contributed powerfully to the first decolonization; a multitude of countries now expect Russia to also compete in the second.

## ***The economic exploitation of the world by the West***

We are often told that economic globalization has allowed the development of industry and middle classes, and therefore potentially democracy, in former third world countries. It's not false, but it's not the whole truth. We did not want to see that this development was, by nature, as antagonistic as that which had often opposed, in the Europe of the

xix<sup>e</sup> century, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Westerners do not have

not recognized that by outsourcing their industry they intended to live like a sort of global bourgeoisie, as exploiters of underpaid work from the Rest of the world. This relationship of exploitation transformed the populations of the “Rest” into a generalized proletariat while allowing local ruling classes to remain, with a certain unconsciousness.

To establish a bridge between colonialism before 1914 and recent globalization, the simplest is to cite a prophetic passage *from Imperialism* by John Hobson, which dates from 1902, a classic of anti-imperialist literature which strongly impressed Lenin although its author was attached to political liberalism.

We have discussed the possibility of an even broader alliance of Western states, of a European federation of great powers which, far from advancing the cause of world civilization, could introduce the gigantic danger of Western parasitism, of 'a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes would levy enormous tributes in Asia and Africa, by means of which they would maintain large masses of tame servants, no longer engaged in the basic agricultural and manufacturing industries, but kept in the execution of personal services or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who believe that such a theory is not worthy of consideration examine the economic and social situation of the districts of southern England which are already reduced to this condition, and consider the immense extension what would such a system experience if China were subject to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors, and political and business leaders. This would amount to draining the largest potential reservoir of proteins the world has ever known, in order to consume them in

[3](#)  
Europe .

Hobson continues by evoking the growing Roman Empire, thrown into the abyss by a parasitic ruling class which, coming from all the shores of the Mediterranean, hunted slaves on the Rhine and transformed the Roman people into assisted plebs, and on the way to its feudal disintegration.

In 1895, HG Wells published *The Time Machine*, which describes the transformation of industrial workers into Morlocks, subterranean cannibal beasts, and that of the bourgeoisie into

Elois, consuming the food produced on the surface before being devoured themselves (c. 802 701). We can only admire the capacity of the intellectuals of the British Empire, then at its peak, to imagine the future. Wells went down to posterity as an author of science fiction. Hobson appears today as a brilliant futurist, with the reservation that his prediction had to wait, to come true, for the exhaustion of European nations in two world wars, for the shift of the center of gravity of the West towards the United States. , and above all the endogenous decomposition of America and Europe through higher education, the dissolution of collective beliefs, the mental atomization of their peoples and their elites.

We see, however, that China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 marked the final shift of the West into Hobson's paradigm.

Engels, in 1892, in his preface to the English reissue of *The Situation of the Working Class in England in 1844*, then Lenin in 1917 in chapter 8 of *Imperialism, the supreme stage of capitalism*, established a link between social reformism- democracy, which they noted, and the indirect participation of the working classes of the West in the surpluses generated by imperialism. European proletarians already owed, according to them, part of their (rising) standard of living to the labor of the colonies – with the British working class at the forefront; they were therefore able to negotiate in a social system that became more friendly to them. What Engels or Lenin could not imagine (but what Hobson had glimpsed) was that the Western proletariat could be completely transformed into plebs living largely off the labor of the Chinese and other peoples of the world.

I have just understood, a little late I admit, that this world has come about thanks to globalization, which has brought consumer society to its final stage. Until around 1980, workers in America, France and elsewhere consumed, for the most part, what they produced: it was the first society of



consumption, resulting from the Trente Glorieuses. But the relocation of Western factories then transformed people. The objects of their consumption are now produced elsewhere. The working proletariat of the 1950s turned into plebs in the 2000s, at the instigation of theorists and practitioners of the globalized economy. What I write here, I point out, is strictly in accordance with the theory set out in the most orthodox international economics textbooks. The theory of free trade is only interested in the consumer, who must be able to buy the goods he needs at the lowest price, and its apostles constantly threaten Western peoples with having to pay more for their food, their clothing, their cell phones, their cars, their medicines, their children's toys and their garden gnomes if they persist in wanting to make them themselves. The apostles won, but their victory had sociopolitical consequences that they had not anticipated.

I have already mentioned the moral disarray of American workers who have been deprived of social usefulness by the removal of their value as producers and have been forced into alcoholism, gorging on opioids and, in despair, committing suicide. . It remains to be explained why the majority of them choose to vote for Trump rather than end their lives; why the popular circles of Western Europe have also switched to the “populist, xenophobic, far-right” vote even where massive and uncontrolled immigration does not threaten them. Why are the populations who survived the dismantling of their industry now right-wing? It's quite simple. The left-wing parties, social democrats or communists, relied on exploited working classes. Populist parties rely on plebs whose standard of living largely derives from the underpaid work of proletarians in China, Bangladesh, the Maghreb and elsewhere. I surprise myself by thinking the following: the popular voters of the National Rally are, in terms of the most elementary Marxist theory, extractors of surplus value from

worldwide. They are therefore very normally right-wing. As Engels and Lenin predicted, free trade corrupts, but we can add: absolute free trade corrupts absolutely.

This cruel analysis also allows us to understand why it is so difficult to reindustrialize. If the relocation of many productive activities has contributed to increasingly anemic our provinces and our suburbs, free trade has kept its promise: favoring the consumer at the expense of the producer, transforming the producer into a consumer, and the productive citizen into a plebeian. parasite, hardly interested in finding the path and discipline of the factory.

But let's not stop at the situation of what we call today "popular circles". It is the whole of society in the advanced Western world (I am excluding the working nations of Eastern Europe here) that protects the labor of Chinese workers and the children of Bangladesh. Young, poorly paid higher education graduates like the "proles". LFI voters like those of the RN. In the United States, the country's chief producer thanks to the dollar, Trump's voters and those of Biden's are all experiencing the surpluses of globalization, even if it is true that the growing social uselessness of popular American circles condemns them more and more. more often to adopt reckless behavior and to suffer abnormal excess mortality.

This vision will surprise, I think, the Western reader, who is so happy to contribute through his purchases to the rise of the Chinese, Indian or Thai middle classes, called, therefore, to become unwavering supporters of liberal democracy. This gratifying representation also turns out to be idiotic while liberal democracy is withering away in the West itself. But if Hobson's vision does not correspond to the perception that the West has of the world, is it not that of the Rest of the world, where men, women and children toil for derisory wages?

And shouldn't we detect here one of the causes of indifference, outside our beloved West, to the concerns of Ukraine? Or, worse, an inclination for this Russia, which although European and white to the point of often being blonde does not play the game of global exploitation but on the contrary insists on remaining a sovereign nation, outside the system?

The economic opposition between an exploitative West and an exploited Rest of the world is a reality. Is it coupled with an opposition between democracies and dictatorships? We have, in fact, already largely answered this question. Three of the initial Brics are indisputable democracies: Brazil, South Africa and India; they have their imperfections, but, if we consider the current state of decay of Western democracies, which have become liberal oligarchies, these imperfections are only venial sins.

In [Chapter 1](#) I disparaged Russia as an authoritarian democracy, because it votes but silences many of its minorities (but not its ethnic minorities). Only China is not a democracy in any way.

This was the situation on the eve of the war. Since then, the Western strategy of sanctions has radicalized the latent antagonism of the West and the “Rest” in two ways: by summoning the “Rest” to choose the West over Russia; by arousing in the upper classes of the “Rest” an unprecedented fear of the United States.

## ***From economic war to world war***

The Ukrainian war is a real war and the Ukrainian people are experiencing martyrdom. Still, the main confrontation pits not Russia against Ukraine, but Russia against the United States and their allies (or vassals). This frontage is before

all economical. Why doesn't it exceed this low level? And is this really, as is often believed, less elevated, less intense, than the military level, where armed men fight?

Russia's nuclear superiority and its new strategy have made Ukraine the theater of very localized conventional operations. The Russians have hypersonic missiles, the Americans do not. Their military doctrine, as we have seen, now authorizes Moscow to use tactical nuclear strikes if the Russian state is threatened. Engaging NATO in a conventional war would create too dangerous a situation.

I would tend to think, however, that the Russians – who, let us not forget, chose the moment to open hostilities and drew up the general framework –, by forbidding them from waging a real conventional war, have satisfied Westerners. Sending military equipment to Ukraine, but not men, fits well with the logic of globalization. We first had what we needed made by workers in low-wage countries; in a second, we have the war we need waged by a low-cost country. The human body is not worth much in Ukraine, we noticed this in relation to surrogacy. It is significant that the *Wall Street Journal*, which focuses primarily on economics, first drew attention to the number of amputees in Ukraine – 20,000 to 50,000 – mass-produced by the counter-offensive summer suicide

2023 <sup>4</sup>. This damage seems to have revived the prosthetics industry in Germany.

If the West has, with good heart, agreed to wage an exclusively economic war for its part, and if it has tried to destroy Russia through sanctions, it has not properly thought out the mechanism. Leaders and the media told us, and they certainly thought it, that economic war was less violent than war itself. She is already not when she

love of the populations. In the case of the Ukrainian war, the sanctions especially broadened the scope of operations to the planet and gave the war, instantly, a global dimension and the character of a struggle to the death between the United States and Russia.

As luck would have it, at the very beginning of 2022 *The Economic Weapon*, “the economic weapon” (which I have already cited), of Nicholas Mulder, a young Dutch academic who teaches

in the United States at Cornell University<sup>5</sup> He explains how sanctions have become the preferred instrument of Western leaders, and to what extent their effects are in no way moderate.

Economic sanctions as a substitute for war are associated with the founding of the League of Nations (SDN) in 1920: this measure was inspired by the blockade implemented by the Allies against the Central Powers during the conflict which had just ended. . It was based on the conviction that this blockade, which had caused hundreds of thousands of deaths from hunger or disease, had played a decisive role in the victory of the Allies over Germany and Austria-Hungary.

To work, economic sanctions must abolish the neutrality of non-belligerents and obtain their participation. A conventional war is played out between two actors, in front of an outside world transformed into a huge audience. Let us think of the war of 1870 between France and Prussia, or the war of 1904-1905 between Russia and Japan. These deadly matches are no longer possible in a sanctions regime. For it to be effective, the rest of the world must apply it at the request, if there is a request, of the power which decided so. If the country to which the request is addressed is an ally, there is obviously no problem. If he is neutral, he will be pressured. If a latent antagonism exists before the war, it will be, instantly or gradually, revealed and activated. This is what has been happening between the United States and the Rest of the world since 2022.

Russia would never have resisted sanctions so well if the Rest of the world, summoned by the United States and its camp to choose, basically agreed to help Russia. The West has discovered that we don't like it. A terrible narcissistic wound. An editorial in *Le Monde* of August 6, 2023, entitled "The effectiveness of sanctions called into question", made us feel this:

The "ghost fleet" which clandestinely transports Russian oil [...] represents between 10% and 20% of the total global transport capacity. It therefore makes it possible to override these sanctions, including through key countries particularly courted by the West, starting with India. The watertightness of the device is even compromised in both directions, since Russia still manages to obtain essential electronic components for an arms industry particularly stressed by a high-intensity war.

The sanctions here clash with politics: containment would involve toughening the tone towards third countries, such as Kazakhstan, at a time when the West is hoping to detach them from the Russian orbit.

The West has enjoined the world to turn against Russia by participating in a system of embargoes, blockades, and bans on people by launching specific prosecutions against prominent politicians and oligarchs. The least we can say is that the majority of countries around the world have not applied these coercive measures. Because it was necessary to choose between one camp or the other, we can argue that *the Rest of the world supported Russia in its effort to break up NATO*, by buying its oil and gas, by providing it with materials and the spare parts it needed to continue the war and function without too much difficulty as a civil society.

The West should have questioned the effectiveness of the sanctions. In recent decades, Venezuela and Iraq have been put under blockade. That of Iraq between the wars of 1990 and 2003 made around 300,000 dead <sup>6</sup> ; that of Venezuela destroyed a good part of society. But neither regime fell. In both cases, it will be objected, these were oil-producing countries, which therefore benefited from a natural windfall. We can

say the same thing about Russia which, in addition to oil, has gas – and with this additional advantage that, with its 17 million

km<sup>2</sup> she has neighbors everywhere whose attitude ranges from abiding friendship to tacit benevolence. Among them, China, the world's leading industrial power, India, but now also Iran and, to a certain extent, Turkey, to which must be added the Muslim countries. Subjecting Russia to an operational blockade was basically, from the start, a preposterous project which could only result from NATO narcissism. It is here that we must remember not so much the optimism of Bruno Le Maire as the narrowness, in size and spirit, of the small band from Washington, operational leader of the Western camp.

I described above the antagonism caused by economic exploitation which is the reality of the West's relationship with the Rest of the world, without being able, unfortunately, to except or absolve our popular circles from it. For the sake of balance, let us also consider, in the countries of the Rest of the world, the people-ruling class duality. It is the workers at the bottom of the social ladder who work hard to ensure the comfort of the West. But the multiple decisions to help Russia, in the Rest of the world, were not the exploited workers who took them, but the Indian, Turkish, Saudi, South African, Brazilian, Argentinian ruling groups, and so many others. One might have expected them to be in solidarity with the West, where they recycle their dollars and of which they could even imagine themselves being a part. The large hotels, the tax havens, the American and English private schools where plutocrats from all countries send their children could, together, delimit a space common to all the super-rich on the planet; and the *Moneyland* dear to Oliver Bullough become the central nervous system of an authentic post-national universe... It's a failure. The illegal seizure of Russian assets abroad has sparked a wave of terror among the upper classes in the Rest of the world. By tracking the money and yachts of Russian oligarchs, the United States (and its vassals) have, in effect, threatened the assets of all

oligarchs of the world, those of large and small countries alike. Escaping the predatory American state has become an obsession everywhere and freeing themselves from the empire of the dollar is becoming a reasonable objective for everyone, even if they have to proceed cautiously and gradually. However, let us salute the involuntary democratic effect that the sanctions will have had, which have, in practice, brought the privileged people of the Rest of the world closer to their people.

The fear inspired by the American Treasury is not, however, the only reason which led the Saudis to agree with the Russians to maintain the price of oil, the Turks to enter into a relationship of cordial competition with the Russians, the Iranians to move ever closer to Moscow, Indians to remain in a de facto alliance with its leaders. As Westerners had anticipated, political and moral values also counted, but, unfortunately for them, in a sense that they had not at all anticipated. Western values are increasingly displeasing.

Anthropological analysis will enlighten us on this point.

## ***Blindness to the anthropological diversity of the world***

We saw in [Chapter 1](#) that the triumphant America of 1945 was aware of the diversity of the world; it had given birth to a dynamic and tolerant cultural anthropology.

This acceptance of diversity has disappeared. We have explained how, from the 1960s, a uniform conception of peoples began to replace it, which the fall of the Soviet system, so to speak, sublimated. By its very existence, the USSR attested to the diversity of the world.

The “end of history” according to Francis Fukuyama completed this process <sup>1</sup>, and justified in advance interventionism: if the world is



homogeneous and uniformly intended to be democratized, why not give a little help to History in progress? A little military help. We also began to hope that China, if it produced to trade, and became richer, if it gave birth to prosperous middle classes, would eventually also generate a liberal democracy. This “McDo” version of Hegel ignored a fundamental fact: the liberal political regimes of England, the United States and France were not born by chance, but from a nuclear and individualist family background. The structures of the Chinese peasant family were characterized by their authoritarianism and egalitarianism, like those of Russia.

Geopolitics encourages schematization, I will content myself with indicating the simplest anthropological opposition possible and present a binary classification of countries, by opposing two systems of kinship, with the family structures which correspond to them, and by placing all the countries of the world on a patrilineality/bilaterality axis.

In a bilateral kinship system, the father's ascendants and collaterals on the one hand, and those of the mother on the other, carry equal weight in determining the social status of the child; the family, centered on the couple, is nuclear. It is, I repeat, the anthropological system which, in the literacy phase, led to liberal democracy because the family made a liberal temperament pre-exist in the population.

In the recent phase which has seen higher education develop, this system has caused the emergence of radical feminism. The final phases of this cultural revolution were the emancipation of homosexuality, the development of an appreciable female bisexuality, and finally of transgender ideology, as I showed in *Where are they? A sketch of the story*

*of women* <sup>8</sup>. The narrow Western world (US, UK, France, Scandinavia) comes from this bilateral anthropological system but he is not aware of it. He thinks he is universal, which

paradoxically does not prevent him from believing himself superior.  
*Beati pauperes spiritu...*

The Rest of the world is mostly different, patrilineal. Its kinship systems operate under an opposing norm.

The fundamental social status of the child is denied only by the father's relatives. The patrilineal principle often coexists with a community family system, with little or no individualism.

As shown in Map 11.2, patrilineal anthropological systems draw on a planisphere an enormous mass which extends from West Africa to North China, crossing the Arab-Persian world; and it includes the whole of Russia. The Western world, bilateral and nuclear, liberal, peripheral, appears very small. The map uses patrilineality rates, because it is necessary to take into account the internal diversity of States and in each people the variable intensity of the patrilineal principle. I obtained it by combining the data of Paola Giuliano and Nathan Nunn with my own knowledge of the kinship systems of the

world, drawn from half a century of research on the family <sup>9</sup>.

We now find nuclear households everywhere, in buildings in Moscow, in Chinese megacities, in Cairo or Tehran; but all the old, patrilineal, community values, refractory to radical feminism, have not disappeared.

The anthropological alignments do not overlap with all the economic alignments studied in the previous paragraphs.

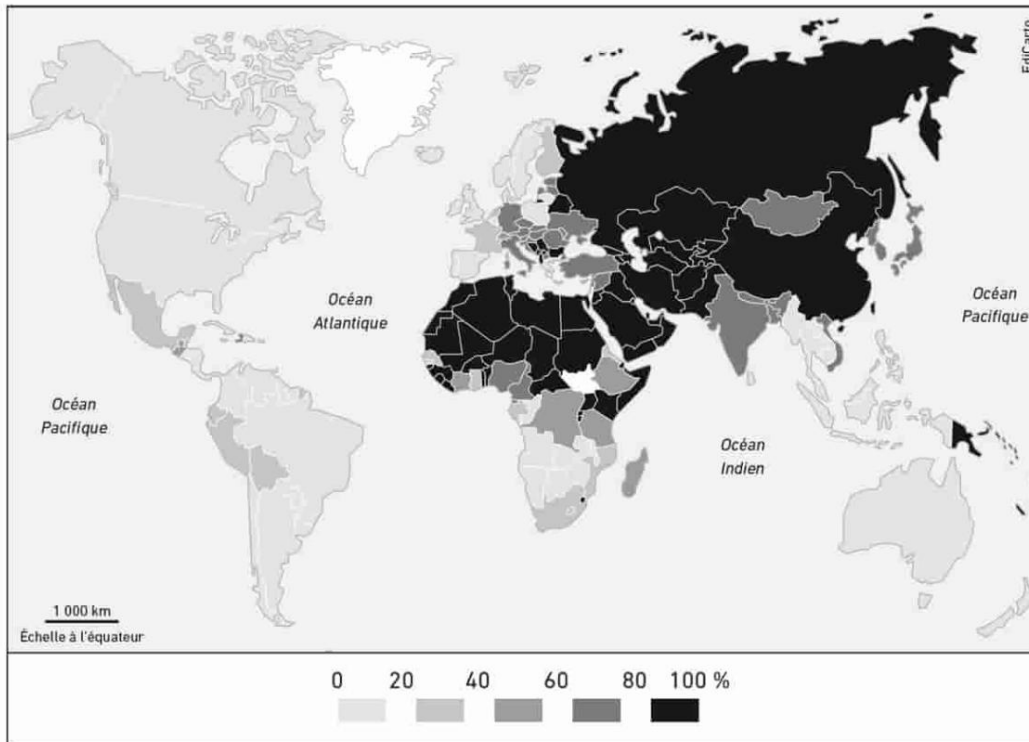
So South America falls here on the Western, bilateral and nuclear side. The latent antagonism between Brazil and the United States cannot in any way be interpreted in anthropological terms. Brazil's hostility is economic and political.

On the other hand, the strange leniency towards Russia of countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey becomes understandable. And we are less surprised to see the people of Mali, Burkina Faso or Niger waving Russian flags. A

**The same patrilineal and anti-individualist sensitivity brings together these seemingly diverse countries.**

**Map 11.2**

**THE RATE OF PATRILINEARITY IN THE WORLD**



**Just like bilateral cultures, patrilineal cultures evolve and it would be a serious error to believe that they ignore the emancipation of women. But this does not take the extreme form of feminism typical of the Western world. I am not blind to the continued repression of women's freedom in Iran.**

**But, in the Islamic Republic, women now study more than men, and have on average fewer than two children.**

**Patrilineality of course has degrees. The Russian community family, for example, is of recent formation and has retained a fairly high status of women compared to that of China. The map places India in an intermediate situation: the patrilineality of North India is undoubtedly even stronger**

than that of China but South India, whose family system is so particular, gives women a better place.

I would classify Germany and Japan as semi-patrilineal. Feminist ideology is less advanced there than in the West

[10](#)

narrow A simultaneously exotic and technological example will perhaps help the reader to agree that not all modernity is Western. Consider the state of Karnataka in India. Its fertility rate was, around 2020, 1.7 children per woman, equal to that of France. Its capital, Bangalore, is one of the centers of the global IT revolution. This state belongs to South India, which is more educationally and economically advanced than North India. The status of women is higher there, although kinship is governed by the principle of patrilineality. The marriage system of Karnataka allows us to observe an absolute coexistence of economic modernity and cultural difference.

South India practices cross-cousin union, that is, marriage between the children of a brother and a sister (marriage between the children of two brothers or between the children of two sisters is however prohibited). In 2019, the first cousin marriage rate in Karnataka was 23.5%. If we add marriages between more distant cousins, as well as marriage between uncle and niece, sometimes authorized, we see that between 1992-1993 and 2015-2016 the total of consanguineous marriages increased from 29.9% of

all marriages at 27.5% [11](#), and that in 2019-2020 the rate

was still 27.2%, a very [12](#). Family endogamy is stable, despite slight initial drop, in the land of IT, in this region of South India which supplies a good part of their engineers to the American Gafa. Yes, anthropology can be useful in understanding the diversity of the present world. In the context of the Ukrainian war, it helps to understand the new Russian *soft power*.

## The new *Russian* soft power

A glance at the homophobia map (11.3) shows how closely it resembles the patrilineality map (11.2). Both illustrate Western isolation.

Questions of morals have become strangely important in international relations. Westerners condemn any country hostile to LGBT ideology as backward.

Sure of embodying a universal modernity, they did not understand that they were making themselves suspect to the patrilineal, homophobic world, and in fact opposed to the Western revolution of morals.

In such a context, vehemently accusing Russia of being scandalously anti-LGBT is playing into Putin's hands. Westerners imagine that the increasingly repressive legislation passed by the Duma against homosexuality and transgender rights (and even more so since the start of the war) proves to the world that Russia is bad. They are wrong. Russia knows that its homophobic and anti-transgender policy, far from alienating other countries on the planet, appeals to many. This conscious strategy gives it considerable *soft power*. The revolutionary *soft power* of communism has been replaced by the conservative *soft power* of the Putin era.

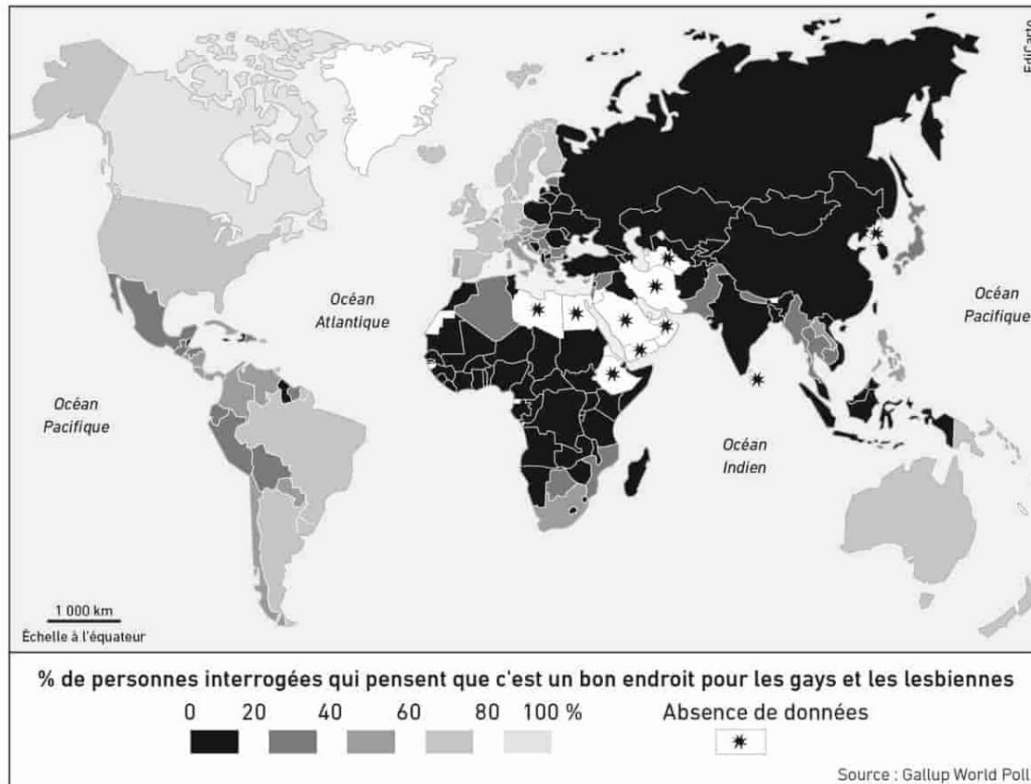
Russian communism had attracted part of the European working classes, particularly in Italy and France, and especially entire countries, such as China. His atheism, however, frightened many people, including those in the Muslim world.

Today's Russia, conservative in terms of morals, no longer suffers from this handicap. Putin, moreover, overplays the role of an Orthodox religion which has long no longer been a notable factor in Russian society. It is to this moral conservatism of a new kind, post-religious, that we must attribute the easy rapprochement that occurred between the regime of the Iranian mullahs and the

**Russia, although it was, with England, one of the two great traditional enemies of Iran. Russian conservatism also makes possible relations that are certainly complex, but increasingly cordial with Erdogan's Turkey, led by an Islamic party, or with Saudi Arabia, a fundamentalist monarchy.**

### Map 11.3

#### HOMOPHOBIA IN THE WORLD



The transgender ideology of the West seems to pose an even more serious problem for the patrilineal world than gay ideology. How could societies in which the difference between paternal and maternal kinship is structuring, and the opposition between men and women conceptually indispensable, accept an ideology which tells us that a man can become a woman and a woman a man? To speak of a simple rejection would be to underestimate the stakes of the conflict. It is entirely plausible that these societies consider that the West has “gone mad”.

Nihilistic perhaps?

Particularly fascinating, in the context of this geopolitical study which must integrate the transgender question, is the problem of the allies or patrilineal vassals of the United States. In



**Ukraine, Taiwan and Japan are passing “LGBT” laws to try to conform to Western standards.**

**The most recent case is that of Japan. As a reader of Kawabata and Tanizaki myself, aware of a complementarity between French and Japanese literature through their meditations on sexuality, I cannot help but talk about it in a little detail.**

**In Japan, on June 16, 2023, the Senate adopted the “Law for Citizens' Understanding of Gender Diversity and Sexual Orientation”, more commonly known as the “LGBT Law”. The bill had been adopted the day before by the Lower House. The ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Kōmei Party, with the support of the Ishin Party and the People's Democratic Party, pushed through the law in an extremely hasty manner. Within the Liberal Democratic Party, the majority of deputies and senators were against. But, as in other parties, we must vote for what is decided by the executives (root family).**

**The left (Constitutional Democratic Party, Japanese Communist Party, Social Democratic Party, Reiwa Shinsengumi Party) voted against the law, considered insufficient. The only party that stood out for its opposition was the Sanseitō Party, represented by its only member in the Senate, Sōhei Kamiya. Three senators from the Liberal Democratic Party left the room before the vote (they were accused of violating party rules).**

**The new United States ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, who had continued to tweet his public support, welcomed the adoption of the law on the X platform (formerly Twitter). Following its adoption, the Supreme Court of Japan ruled that the ban on a transgender employee working at the Ministry of Economy from using the women's toilet was illegal. Furthermore, Shibuya commune now has no public toilets reserved for women. Protest movements to save women's toilets have started at the initiative of people like Moe Fukada, a technological intelligence analyst. The fear**

rumors of one day seeing transgender women (men, therefore) entering public baths for women... To be continued. We will one day know whether Japan's political conversion to LGBT ideology brought the Japanese population closer to the United States or added an extra dose of resentment against the great protector.

The supreme irony lies elsewhere. These legislations are introduced to strengthen belonging to the West and make American protection against Russia or China more secure. But let's think a little and return to the deeper meaning of transgender ideology, as I analyzed it in [Chapter 8](#). It says that a man can become a woman, and a woman can become a man. It is an armament of the false and, in this sense, close to the theoretical heart of Western nihilism. But how could adherence to a cult of falsehood lead to a more secure military alliance? For my part, I think that there is in fact a mental and social connection between this cult of falsehood and the now proverbial inability of the United States in international affairs. Just as a man can become a woman, a nuclear treaty with Iran (Obama) can transform, overnight, into an aggravated sanctions regime (Trump). Let's be a little more ironic: American foreign policy is in its own way *gender uid*. Georgia and Ukraine now know what American protection is worth. Taiwan and Japan would not, I am convinced, be defended by the United States against China. They no longer have the industrial means. But, above all, the nihilistic ideology, which is constantly progressing in America, transforms the very principle of respecting commitments into an obsolete, negative thing. Betrayal becomes normal. By voting for these laws out of complacency, the countries of East Asia therefore “validate” in advance

1. With Georges Liébert, we had this work translated by Robert Editions Laont from 1980, under the title *Le Complexe de Narcisse*.

2. The North Korean system represents the mutation of a standard communist totalitarianism into an ethnicizing totalitarianism led by a family lineage. The Korean root family, which encourages lineage continuity and an ethnic perception of the people (the inequality of brothers becomes inequality of men and peoples), can explain this molt.

3. John A. Hobson, *Imperialism. A Study*, London, Unwin Hyman, 1988, p. 364-365.

4. *Wall Street Journal*,<sup>er</sup> August 2023.

15. N. Mulder, *The Economic Weapon*, *op. cit.*

6. Joy Gordon, *Invisible War. The United States and the Iraq Sanctions*, Harvard University Press, 2010, note 82, p. 255-257.

7. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Flammarion, 1992.

8. E. Todd, *Where are they ?*, *op. cit.*

9. Paola Giuliano and Nathan Nunn, "Ancestral Characteristics of Modern Populations," *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 33 (1), 2018, p. 1-17; Emmanuel Todd, *The Origin of Family Systems*, Gallimard, 2011 and *The Diversity of the World*, Le Seuil, 1999 and 2017.

10. E. Todd, *Where are they ?*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

11. Mir Azad Kalam et al., "Change in the Prevalence and Determinants of Consanguineous Marriages in India between National Family and Health Surveys (NFHS) 1 (1992–1993) and 4 (2015–2016)," Human Biology Open Access Pre- Prints, WSU Press, October 11, 2020.

12. India, *National Family Health Survey 2019-2021* (Indian version of DHS, *Development and Health Survey*).

## CONCLUSION

# ***How the United States fell into the Ukraine trap***

1990-2022

The period since the fall of the Berlin Wall has not been well understood. The original illusion was to believe that the fall of the USSR resulted from an American victory. But by the time it occurred, as we have shown, the United States itself had been in decline for twenty-five years. If communism imploded, it was for internal reasons: educational stratification shattered a system already weakened by its economic contradictions.

We have repeatedly traced the consequences of this illusion, but in scattered order. It is time, to close this book, to bring together in a sequence ordered by chronology the elements scattered throughout the previous chapters. We will use what we now know about the internal evolution of Russian, Ukrainian, Eastern European and Western societies to propose a new reading of the three decades which followed the Cold War and plunged NATO into the Ukrainian trap.

The fall of the USSR set History in motion again. It created a vacuum that sucked in the Western, and mainly American, system, while it itself was in crisis and atrophying at its center. A double movement was triggered: a wave

of America's outward expansion, even while within the United States there was an increase in poverty and mortality. The decline of religion and, above all, of collective civic beliefs which followed it was stronger, more extreme than elsewhere in the advanced world.

Note that all the actors in the war, Russia included, are affected by the same movement towards a zero state of religion. It does not always manifest itself through the appearance of a nihilistic state of mind, which denies the reality of the world and tends towards war, but populations everywhere now seem incapable of reproducing. In the Western liberal world *stricto sensu* – –, fertility United States, United Kingdom, France, Scandinavia, the rate is closer to 1.6 children per woman; 1.5 in Germany and Russia.

All nations, *including Russia*, are “inert,” in the sense in which I denigrated this concept in [Chapter 5](#), rather than active. No powerful collective feeling animates them, to restore their greatness through economic prowess, through war or any other project that would unite citizens in a fervent common effort.

Where complex family forms predominated, integrating the individual into the group, there remains a residue of collectivity which allows governments to take more effective action. I portrayed Germany (from the original family) as a machine society. I add here that Russia (community family), despite the sovereignist ideal which animates its ruling class, despite its capacity to bounce back economically and technologically (like Germany), is not nationalist in the classic sense. It is also an “inert nation”, and this is why Putin wants, above all, to protect it from total commitment to war; he mobilized slowly because the Russians too, even if they remain more than the French (for example) attached to their nation, are postmodern individuals who think first of their pleasures and their sorrows. However, they are protected from the extreme form that postmodernity has taken: nihilism, this evil specific to societies

that their anthropology denies as individualistic, with the Anglo-American world in the lead. Counterbalances to nihilism exist in France because a good half of its periphery contained complex family structures (root, community and others). Nothing, on the other hand, slows down the United States and England in their centripetal, narcissistic then nihilistic drift. Thanks to a stem component, Scotland may be spared.

In the Anglo-American world, the stage of the inert nation seems to have been passed around 2020. If the Russian, German and French ruling classes remain ethno-national, those of the Americanosphere have lost their original cultural base. The aristocratic feeling that prevailed in England until around 1980 has since disappeared. As for America, we could still consider it, around 1990, as a nation, certainly imperial but which retained a vibrant cultural center. America today is no longer a nation-state; it has lost its ruling class and its ability to set direction. Around 2015, it reached what I called state zero. This expression does not mean that the country no longer exists or no longer produces anything but that it is no longer structured by its original values: Protestant, and that the morality, the work ethic and the feeling of responsibility which animated its population has evaporated. The election of Trump, champion of vulgarity, then that of Biden, champion of senility, will have been the apotheosis of this zero state. Washington's decisions have ceased to be moral or rational. I will therefore not give this America which no longer knows who it is or where it is going the classic paranoid image of an effective manipulative system.

Let's return to geopolitics. The Ukrainian war closes the cycle opened in 1990. The expansionist wave, which continues to empty the center of America of its substance and its energy, came to break against Russia, an inert but stable nation.

How did we get there ? Why have the Americans engaged in a fight they cannot win?

**Why did they find themselves at war with Russia when, since Obama, their geopolitical literature made China the main adversary? Even though, also since Obama, a withdrawal seemed to be underway, a return to a more modest international posture.**

**The historical consciousness of Western actors (and not just Americans) is at its lowest. Our governments make decisions but their vision of the balance of planetary forces – military, economic, ideological – and their evolution is, as we have seen, fantasmatic. Their lack of awareness, and the absence of a real project that results from it, justifies a chronological approach: it is the examination of the concrete decisions of the actors, in a historical sequence that they have not mastered, which allows to understand the march to war, inexorable as well as absurd, that we have witnessed. The existence of a nihilistic component in the United States and another in Ukraine, of different natures, also *a priori* excludes a rational interpretation of History. Our only consolation will be to see the fusion of the two nihilisms, the American and the Ukrainian, lead to defeat, the ultimate revenge of reason in History.**

## ***The main stages***

**I will distinguish in the action of the United States, the central actor in this march to war (rather than Russia), four phases defined by the evolution of American military spending as a proportion of GDP.**

**GDP, as we saw in [Chapter 9](#), is not a good indicator of real economic power. If I therefore rely on the percentage of GDP devoted to military spending, it is because this indicator is likely to measure the interest of the United States in military matters.**

## ***Phase 1***

In the years following the fall of the USSR, the United States accepted the prospect of general peace: the fraction of GDP that it devoted to its military expenditure fell, between 1990 and 1999, from 5.9% to 3.1%. The disarmament to which this fall corresponds allows us to confirm that, during this phase of around ten years, the United States does not have any plans for world domination.

## ***Phase 2***

Between 1999 and 2010, ten years of hubris took place. The fraction of GDP devoted to military spending rose again, reaching 4.9% in 2010. The United States began to dream of absolute control over the world. Failures – in Iraq, in Afghanistan – follow one another.

## ***Phase 3***

The time comes to retreat. I would place the beginning not in 2010, as military spending suggests, but in 2008, the year of the *subprime* crisis and the election of Barack Obama, an instinctively peaceful president. In 2017, military spending returned to 3.3% of GDP.

## ***Phase 4***



The fourth and final phase could be titled: the exit from reality. The United States falls into the trap of the Ukrainian war. Military spending is increasing, but insignificantly: 3.7% in 2020, 3.4% in 2021. These modest figures invite us to qualify Vladimir Putin's speech and, incidentally, Mearsheimer's analyses: far from being hawkish, the United States had renounced expansion and did not want a confrontation with Russia, but the nihilistic dream of the Ukrainian nationalists, a product of the decomposition of the Soviet Union, lured them. Putin, however, had no reason to distinguish kyiv from Washington. He decided to go to war at the moment that seemed opportune. Everything suggests that his calculation was excellent.

Current geopoliticians take into account three major players: America, China, its main adversary, and Russia, its secondary adversary. I will keep them, but I will add Germany as a fundamental player. Its weight in Europe has continued to increase between 1990 and 2020. The Ukrainian war is taking place on its doorstep and we must not believe that Chancellor Scholz's evasive style sums up the role that Germany plays in this crisis. , European become global.

I am personally convinced that the United States' efforts to separate Germany from Russia – one of its strategic obsessions since 1990 – will ultimately fail. On the map of Europe, two major forces stand out, Germany and Russia. Their common fertility of 1.5 children per woman calms them and brings them together. They can no longer wage war; their economic specializations designate them as complementary. Sooner or later, they will collaborate. The American-Ukrainian defeat will pave the way for their rapprochement. The United States will not be able to undeniably stem the gravitational force, so to speak, which mutually attracts Germany and Russia.

Now let's look at the real story of the years 1990-2022.

## ***1990-1999: the peaceful phase***

Let's start with the implosion of the Soviet Union, between November 1989 (fall of the Berlin Wall) and December 1991 (Social of the USSR). On October 3, 1990, Germany was reunited under the leadership of Kohl. Bush senior accepts what must be considered as an annexation of the GDR by the FRG, against the advice of François Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher, who, born in 1916 and 1925, remembered German predominance on the continent. Everyone, then, interprets the rise of communism as a victory for the United States, and is wrong. In America, we don't take Germany seriously. On this date, the FRG had 62.7 million inhabitants and the GDR 16.4 million. In total, that makes 79.1 million inhabitants. In the eyes of the French (58.1 million) and the British (57.3 million), this is already too much.

For Americans (250.1 million), that's not much.

Panicked, our financial inspectors and other enarques concocted the Treaty of Maastricht: they demanded the dissolution of the mark into the euro and obtained, by accepting the creation of a European Central Bank in Frankfurt, that of the franc into the mark. Germany now holds the monetary key to Europe. But because the Germans were for a time confronted with the costs of reunification, the French and British believed them to be in denial and forgot the German problem. Post-war "young people" succeeded Mitterrand and Thatcher.

The question, so often raised today, of a guarantee that the United States would have given to Russia not to extend NATO towards the East is of little interest. It is an ahistorical debate which ignores the state of mind of the actors at the time. None

no political leader had been able to envisage the collapse of the Soviet Union; once this disappeared, no one imagined the abyss into which Russia would fall. It remained in people's minds a superpower, a pole of balance. An extension of NATO was unthinkable.

The intentions of the United States were then peaceful. Between 1990 and 1999, their military spending, as we have seen, fell massively. But then the second unthinkable event occurred: after the USSR, Russia collapsed. We did not understand that communism was more than an economic organization, that it had become, after Orthodoxy, the religion of Russia, a collective belief which united society. His disappearance led to a state of anarchy which brought the country to the brink of disintegration. Around 1994, life expectancy, declining rapidly due to sanitary conditions, homicides and suicides, reached its nadir. GDP per capita fell to its lowest point in 1996. As for Russia's overall GDP (more archaic, physical, real than American GDP), it was in 1998 that it reached its lowest point, after a financial crisis. and a default on the debt.

Barter spread and people wondered if the ruble would survive. Let us add that in 1994-1996 the Russian army lost the first Chechen war and therefore proved incapable of preventing the dissidence of a very small population of the Caucasus, it is true very violent.

The United States looked with condescension at Russia which, between 1994 and 1998, hit rock bottom. They tried to continue to consider it as a nation in transition, capable of one day becoming a democracy like any other. However, around 1997-1998, his obvious weakness shifted from a benevolent attitude to the dream of a knockout. nal. Here comes the beginnings of hubris.

Brzezinski's *Grand Chessboard* dates from 1997. In retrospect, we cannot say whether this book expresses fear or hope. It describes the American Empire born from the Second

**World War, with its footholds in the conquered nations of Germany and Japan. Let us first examine the fear that Brzezinski then felt: if the fall of communism made America useless, the Japanese but especially the German poles could join forces with Russia; a Eurasian mass would emerge that would marginalize the United States. The association of Germany and Russia constitutes the main threat.**

**The hope that animated Brzezinski now: with Russia collapsing, he suggested that it could be finished off if Ukraine were torn from it, an amputation that would forever deprive it of its imperial status. If the Ukrainian war ultimately leads to the fall of the *American Empire*, Zbigniew Brzezinski will go down in the history of geopolitics as the greatest involuntary comedian of all time.**

## ***1999-2008: hubris***

**In Greek mythology, Bellerophon, after many exploits, including the capture of the winged horse Pegasus, flies to the sky with the intention of sitting there alongside the gods. Zeus, furious at such presumption, sends a gadfly to sting Pegasus who unhorses Bellerophon. He falls into a thorn bush and only survives to lead the miserable existence of a blind man on earth. His story illustrates the destiny of all those seized by “hubris”, this excess which is born from a lack of understanding of ourselves and our limits.**

**From 1999, the United States entered a state of hubris. For the first time in their history, they no longer have an opponent. Stunned by this emptiness, they lose their minds. Aeschylus claims that Hubris was the daughter of Dyssebeia, Impiety. In fact, American hubris begins at the very moment when zombie Protestantism disappears and the country plunges toward religious zero.**

Until then, no NATO enlargement had yet taken place. But in 1999, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary joined the Alliance in response to an invitation made in Madrid in 1997.

Also in 1999, from March to June, NATO bombed Serbia, a seventy-eight day air campaign during which, for good measure, a few bombs were dropped on the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.

Irony of history: 1999, which marks the entry of the United States into its phase of hubris, also saw the arrival to power of Putin and the beginning of Russia's recovery.

At this stage, we cannot yet speak of an anti-Russian fixation in the Western ruling spheres: how can we be hostile to a power that we believe to be completely defeated? We were content, during the 1990s, through OPNGs (pseudo non-governmental organizations) and American businessmen who were active in Moscow or Saint Petersburg, to try to take control of everything that can be in Russia, and particularly hydrocarbons. In the minds of the Americans, Russia has ceased to exist as an autonomous actor, its destiny is to enter their hegemonic system, a partner at a level that remains to be denied, but in any case submissive.

A hyperactive child, America has difficulty focusing its attention on a single goal. Russia is no longer perceived as a threat and the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, was able to divert the agitation of the United States towards the Middle East, where it attacks powers non-existent. The invasion of Afghanistan is justified since that is where bin Laden took refuge. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 is not at all: it marks the entry of the United States into a new phase in its history, pure and simple war of aggression. What Iraq suffered will be remembered (after the defeat of the West) in the history books,

as one of the shames of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The brand new nihilist component of America gives birth to Colin Powell, who, test tube in hand at the United Nations, weapon that Iraq holds

weapons of mass destruction. Nihilism denies reality and truth; it is a cult of lies. The Bush administration has, on this level, innovated.

By 1999, the military budget had started to increase again. The little world of geopoliticians only talks about the American hyperpower and a unipolar world. The end of the story in its military version. Note that the September 11 attacks took place *after* military spending had increased, and therefore after the United States had entered into hubris.

They believe themselves to be so invincible that, on December 11, 2001, they brought China into the WTO (World Trade Organization), the most ill-considered political and economic act imaginable. Its consequences will be much more catastrophic for them than their retreat from Iraq or Afghanistan.

In September 2002, Bush has presented the new “ *US National Security Strategy* ” to the world. All the countries of the world are converging towards “common values”, and “the great powers are now in the same camp”: “Russia,” he explains, “is at the heart of a transition on which we are basing a lot of hope, in search of a democratic future, and it is a partner in the war against terrorism. Chinese leaders are discovering that economic freedom is the only source of wealth. In time, they will find that social and political freedom is the only source of national greatness.

America will encourage progress in democracy and economic openness in both countries. » So much for the fairy tale side.

Then the military side. The objective of this new strategy is to achieve technological and military superiority such that it will discourage any arms race. The American dream has taken off into a new virtual world. Between 1995 and 2002, the proportion of Internet users in the United States increased from 10 to 60% of the population. The cinema has received well

the new trajectory: in 1999 the film *Matrix* was released, which actually immerses us in a virtual world.

But we don't stop History, it continues, it goes quickly, surprisingly quickly, and especially since Francis Fukuyama declared it denies. While the United States blunders in Iraq and Afghanistan, letting China decimate its industry, Russia is recovering. The speed of the rebound will surprise as much as the brutality of the collapse in the 1990s.

In August and September 1999, the Chechens invaded Dagestan and carried out attacks on Russian soil, notably in Moscow. Putin is crushing Chechnya with extreme brutality.

Its popularity is assured. He then showed moderation by granting Chechnya an original status, an autonomy based on clans not all of which were initially favorable to the Russians. The success of this policy will allow the Chechen regiments to play, on the Russian side, a major role in the Ukrainian war.

This second Chechen war was the first sign that Russia was not going to fall apart. Westerners paid little attention to it; nor did they notice that its economic situation had started to improve even before Putin came to power.

Optimistic or cautious, we don't know, Putin initially showed himself to be very complacent towards the United States. The day after September 11, he expressed his solidarity and opened Central Asia to the American army to facilitate the conquest of Afghanistan.

His pro-Americanism then worried the Russian elites <sup>1</sup>.

Russia was not, from 1999-2001, the only power that was recovering. The Germans only took ten years to digest East Germany. In 2001, their trade surplus began to soar, which in 2004 will exceed 5% of GDP and 7% in 2015.

The reorganization of the German economy cannot be reduced to an industrial upgrade of the enlarged Bundesrepublik.

The integration into NATO of the Czech Republic, Poland and

Hungary created a vast safe zone for German investments. The essential part of Germany's recovery consisted of integrating the former popular democracies into its industrial system by putting their active populations, well educated by communism, to work.

Germany's economic recovery preceded, as we have seen, the liberal reforms of the Labor Code. A bad mind will note that the undervaluation of the euro compared to what a maintained mark would have been subsequently tremendously strengthened German exports. The explanation doesn't convince me. I have the feeling that, in any economic system or configuration, the Germans would have gotten away with it, simply because they embody Germany, with its anthropological (root), educational and technological potential. The same logic always made me think that the Russians would get through this because they embody Russia, with its anthropological (community), educational and technological potential. Today I remain convinced that Germany, once disorganized by the disruption of its Russian gas supply, will get through this. Since the British newspaper *The Economist*, which always gets it wrong, presented it again (on August 17, 2023) as the sick man of Europe, I am sure of it.

Europe in the 1990s was shaken up by the fall of the wall but, since the 1980s, it has been doing better than the United States. Even before the Second Iraq War, anti-European resentment had arisen there. In the June-July 2002 issue of *Policy Review*, Robert Kagan published an article entitled "Power and Weakness." The success he achieved led him to write a small book, *Of Paradise and Power*, published after the start of the Iraq War and therefore after the refusal of the French and the

Germans to participate <sup>2</sup>. But, in the 2002 text, it had broken out in it an envious contempt of the Europeans, whom Kagan said "were from Venus", while the Americans were "from Mars". In other words, Europeans were women, if not women.



womenlets. This virilist aggressiveness had its origins in the more or less conscious observation that the United States was falling behind in relation to the Old World. In 2002-2003, it had been more than fifteen years (since approximately 1986) that the life expectancy of Europeans exceeded that of Americans.

Whatever. The megalomaniac delirium continues and grows. In 2004, NATO included Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, after they were invited to Prague in 2002. In a coordinated manner, in 2004, these same countries (minus Bulgaria and Romania) joined the EU.

The two laggards will be absorbed in 2007. At this point, EU expansion is clearly a by-product of NATO expansion.

The rush to the East continues. From November 22, 2004 to January 23, 2005, an “orange revolution” took place in Ukraine. The United States plays a crucial role in this. It is not the European Union that is in charge, but them, either directly through their embassy, or through their services, or through NGOs, sorry, OPNG. At the same time, the American discourse on Russia is shifting. In *The Dark Double*, Andrei Tsygankov studied the appearance of Russophobia in the United States. He convincingly<sup>3</sup> shows that the press and broadcast media were the source of their change of attitude. As early as November 2005, a *Washington Post* editorial was titled "Mr. Putin's Counter

Revolution<sup>4</sup>". A few months later, in March 2006, a brochure from the Council on Foreign Relations appeared with the explicit title: *Russia's Wrong Direction*. They criticize a “ dedemocratization ” of Russia. But the fiercest article appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, also in March 2006: “The Rise of US Nuclear Primacy.” The United States is presented as so much more powerful than the rest of the world that a first nuclear strike could put its adversary out of action before it can retaliate. As it concerns nuclear weapons, Russia, a historic competitor

in this area, is, of course, targeted. *Foreign Affairs* is a rival to *Dr. Strangelove*, this hilarious film in which Stanley Kubrick staged an American nuclear attack on Russia, unintentional of course, but with the help of a recycled Nazi advisor (Peter Sellers). ) and a crazy soldier (George C. Scott).

Can the behavior of the Russians justify this shift?

The crushing of Chechnya took place in the middle of a honeymoon between Washington and Moscow. The bringing of the oligarchs into line, including the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky (who was involved with ExxonMobil) in October 2003, is on the other hand a factor. Beyond the failure of an American attempt to get its hands on hydrocarbons, the bringing into line of the Russian oligarchs shocks the United States. Across the Atlantic, the oligarchs are in the process of winning over the State. However, I think that the real cause of the anti-Russian turnaround is more strategic in a classic sense: the formation of a common German-French-Russian front against the Iraq war put *the American geopolitical establishment* on alert, the Blob in the making. .

Even before the start of the war, Putin visited Berlin on February 9, 2003, and the next day in Paris. After the outbreak of war, three joint meetings and press conferences took place – Putin, Schröder, Chirac, the first on April 11, 2003 in Saint Petersburg; the second on August 31, 2004 in Sochi; the third on July 3, 2005 in Kaliningrad. During these two years, a continental realignment independent of the United States took place, at the same time as the German economy extended its hegemony in Eastern Europe.

Far from following France, Germany played a leading role in opposition to the Iraq War. The world remembers Dominique de Villepin's admirable speech at the UN, but Hans Kundnani clearly shows, in *The Paradox of German Power*, that it was the French who followed the Germans and not the other way around: Schröder had declared that he would oppose

the invasion of Iraq even if weapons inspectors discovered secret weapons there, at a time when France

still kept its Security Council <sup>5</sup>. Germany is then a member options open. "Together with our French friends, with Russia and China, we are more convinced than ever that the disarmament of Iraq can and must be achieved by peaceful means," declared German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder on March 14, 2003.

The main motivation for the anti-Russian turnaround of the Americans was therefore the fear of an independent and active Germany, and especially of a Germany wishing to get along with Russia. After the victory over Saddam Hussein, Condoleeza Rice, Bush's Security Advisor and then Secretary of State, formulated this truth through her denial: "We must punish France, ignore Germany and forgive Russia. » We know that Russia will not be forgiven, that France will not be punished.

But Germany will be anything but ignored.

Brzezinski's nightmare seems to be coming true; and Russian gas darkens it further. Work on the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline, resulting from a project launched in 1997, began in 2005 and ended in 2011, leading to effective commissioning in 2012. Apart from the very real importance of energy, you should know that gas and oil occupy a large place in the geopolitical psyche of America, just as blacks occupy another, disproportionate one, in its sociological psyche.

During the years 2003-2010, a German-Russian conjunction took shape, with the blessing of the French who, it must be said, give the impression of not really understanding what is at stake.

The mental space of the Quai d'Orsay, far from being global, does not extend beyond Berlin, Beirut and Brazzaville.

What the Kremlin is criticized for is less for having made an autocratic shift (official argument from *Russia's Wrong Direction* in 2006) than for getting along better and better with two European democracies. The brochure might as well have

be called *Germany's Wrong Direction* or *France's Wrong Direction* or, why not, *Europe's Wrong Direction*. If autocracy really worried the thinking heads of American foreign policy, a pamphlet entitled *Saudi Arabia's Wrong Direction* would have been more appropriate.

On February 10, 2007, at the Munich Security Conference, Putin delivered a seminal speech. He declares, quite simply, that Russia will not accept a unipolar world where the United States would rule the roost. We can interpret the invitations addressed to Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO, in April 2008, during the Bucharest summit, as being the United States' response to this Munich speech. It is the apogee of hubris, before the reux: the *subprime* crisis is growing. The fall of Bellerophon begins; the return to earth is approaching for the Washington elite. But it's too late, the gods have blinded those they want to lose and America is too committed. At the Bucharest summit, by opening NATO to Ukraine, the United States began to dig a trap from which it will no longer be able to escape.

From August 2008, Georgia was the victim of one of the countless promises that the United States could not keep: the Russians intervened in the small republic's quarrels with its separatist province of South Ossetia and instigated its defeat. Georgia loses South Ossetia and as a bonus Abkhazia. America, which three months earlier invited Georgia to join NATO, did not budge. The small republic lost 18% of its territory.

Looking at the map of Ukraine in September 2023, I noticed that at this point it had lost 18-20% of its population (including Crimea) and I wondered if some secret geopolitical law might not predict that all A country that counts on American protection against Russia or China is not destined to lose roughly 20% of its territory. No, I'm digressing: for Taiwan it could be 100%, for Lithuania at most 1 to 2% (the Suwalki corridor between Belarus and Kaliningrad). As for Ukraine, if, as I believe, the Russians' ultimate objective is

to annex the oblasts of Crimea, Lugansk, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnipro, Zaporizhia, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odessa, the loss would be 40%.

## ***2008-2017: American withdrawal and German hubris (special peace)***

American military spending only decreased again from 2010, but from 2008 America was brought back to greater modesty. She attempts a return from *hubris* to *sophrosunè*, its opposite according to Socrates, this moderation which derives from a good evaluation of oneself. With the *subprime* crisis, the myth of an enchanting economy is dissipating. 2008 is also, of course, the election of Barack Obama.

The tragedy of Obama's presidency is that the man's personal qualities were unable to curb the forces of history. Intelligent, very, and instinctively peaceful, he had been one of the rare politicians who had the courage to oppose the Iraq War. Born in Honolulu, he was 47 years old in 2008, and as a result Europe and its Middle East annex do not obsess him like most geopolitician-gerontocrats in Washington, trained during the Cold War. He embodies the return of common sense to the White House. In 2012, he allowed Russia to enter the WTO.

He refuses to arm Ukraine. Reaching a nuclear deal

Iranian in July 2015, he strives to extricate the United States from the Middle Eastern quagmire. He succeeded in Iraq, which the last American soldiers left on December 18, 2011, but he failed in Afghanistan.

If the United States agreed to withdraw from the Middle East, it is also because from 2009 they regained their energy autonomy. In 2008, the low point of their oil production, it

was only 300 million tonnes; in 2021, it will reach 711 million. During the same period, their gas production increased by 71% and placed them first in the world.

I would be tempted to see in Obama the last of the responsible American presidents and basically, through his morality and his intelligence – let's dare say the word – the last representative of the WASP elite, even if he is only white through his mother. (against Freud but like Erich Fromm and the rabbis of Israel, I believe in the predominance of the mother).

The American state, however, continues its race towards the abyss, in small steps, through inertia. In 2009, NATO joined Croatia. In 2010, the life expectancy of white Americans aged 45-54 began to decline.

In 2002, I wrote in *After the Empire* that the world was too vast and alive for the United States to control it. In 2011, it's obvious. If Americans are entangled in their internal problems – economic recovery and health system reform, History everywhere is accelerating, especially in the Arab world. On December 17, 2010, the Tunisian revolution broke out; Ben Ali fled on January 14, 2011. On January 3, a protest movement began in Algeria. On January 14, it is the Jordanians' turn to demonstrate. The next day, the Egyptian revolution broke out. January 27 is the start of the Yemeni revolution. On February 14, the population rose up in Bahrain, on February 15 in Kadha's Libya. On February 20, Morocco was also affected by a protest movement. Finally, on March 15, the uprising against Bashar al-Assad began in Syria.

On March 17, 2011, the Americans allowed themselves to be drawn into a final intervention in Libya, without enthusiasm. This is the tail of the comet. The heart is no longer there. Europeans, including the French, more than the Americans, were then carried away by the hype of bombing.

On March 11, 2011, a tsunami caused the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan. Angela Merkel announces, without consulting a single one of her European partners, that Germany will phase out nuclear power. The collapse of American military hubris seems strangely to coincide with another attack of hubris, this one German, and extremely original it must be admitted, because it excludes any military character. It could be described as peaceful, economic and demographic. Germany derives from its trade surpluses a financial power which makes it, in fact, the patron saint of Europe. The geopolitical erasure of France is immediate. The zero religious state of France very quickly corresponds to two presidents increasingly close to zero, Nicolas

Sarkozy then François Hollande <sup>6</sup>. Absolute zero (in the sense sociological, which supposes a complete disappearance of traditional values and parties) will however only be reached in 2017 with Emmanuel Macron.

Nord Stream I was commissioned in 2012. Germany's link with Russia is being strengthened. In 2013, Croatia entered the EU: it is Germany's number one satellite in post-communist Europe. Between 1989 and 2021, its population plunged from 4.8 million to 3.9 million, a fall of 900,000 people, but by that date 436,000 Croats were already living in Germany. The Greek crises of 2010, 2011 and 2015 show that Germany is in charge; it imposes the vision of a hierarchical Europe, conforming to the ideal of the original family, authoritarian and unequal: Berlin at the top, France at the bottom, Greece at the bottom. Adjutant Hollande specially dispatched financial inspectors to Athens to smoke out the Greek government.

In July 2013, Russia committed absolute sacrilege: taking undoubtedly for the England of the <sup>e</sup> century or Switzerland of the time Nazi 19th century, it granted political asylum to Edward Snowden.

German hubris reached its peak during the summer of 2015, when Chancellor Merkel, once again without consulting her European partners, welcomed more than 1 million refugees, many of whom were fleeing Syria. “*Wir schaen das*”, she preaches, “We will do it”, Germanic version of Obama’s “*Yes, we can*” – with one notable difference: when the Germans announce that they are going to do something, they are more credible than the Americans.

The previous year, German hubris had a huge consequence: Euromaidan, which began on November 21, 2013. Unlike what happened in 2005 with the Orange Revolution, the Americans no longer played a leading role here. This time, it was the European Union led by Germany that was at the forefront. maneuver.

The Orange Revolution ultimately came to nothing: the alternation of pro-Western and pro-Russian phases continued, anarchy and corruption persisted. The Orange Revolution, however, had hiddenly raised Ukrainian nationalism. It reaches maturity in 2014 and all its strength will manifest itself during the crisis. But it is the European Union which triggers the collapse of the regime by demanding that the kyiv government choose between it and Russia. The EU is tearing Ukraine apart and giving nationalists from the west of the country, historically linked to the Germanic, Austrian and then German worlds, a chance. It was indeed German Europe which, through its unarmed expansion, forced Ukraine to choose. Without being absolutely certain myself, it seems to me that what Germany was looking for in Ukraine was, in accordance with its new nature as a machine society, an active population rather than territories. The final economic collapse of the Ukrainian economy, which the severance of the link with Russia had made inevitable, would mechanically release an emigration that Germany, and Russia for that matter, could share. This is exactly what happened.



America had no interest in the whole matter even though Germany, in its fit of special pacific hubris, still counted on the United States to ensure its security. They are, however, led by their protégé, forced to follow, even to outbid, under penalty of losing all control in this fundamental strategic zone where Russia and Germany meet, to oppose or to negotiate.

The Americans have abandoned the Middle East, one of their three poles of external domination with Europe and Eastern Asia. They cannot bring themselves to see the emergence of a Europe that could do without them. When they intervene in Ukraine, from now on, it is not to break Russia through offensive action; it is to hold the Germans and stop the politics

autonomous (and very clumsy) European that is taking shape <sup>7</sup>. America, around 2015, has clearly gone into defensive mode.

Let's listen to Antony Blinken, then deputy secretary of state under Obama, in June 2015: "Both in Eastern Ukraine and the South China Sea, we are seeing efforts to unilaterally and forcibly alter the *status quo* – transgressions

opposed by the United States and its allies" The wording reflects a strictly defensive posture. This, however, is of a unique kind because the United States is located on the borders of Russia (in the Baltic countries) and China (in Taiwan) very, very far from their own borders. A megalomaniac defensive posture, one could say, particularly in a country which is weakening at its center. In 2014, Russia regained Crimea. The United States had not moved. On September 30, 2015, Russia intervened in Syria. The United States still does not move. <sup>8</sup>

***2016-2022: the trap of Ukrainian nihilism***

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom voted in favor of Brexit. On November 8, Donald Trump was elected President of the United States. The Anglo-American world is entering a state of weightlessness. From the point of view of historical sociology, it is, let us repeat, the year of absolute zero. We will now observe and have to explain strategic decisions devoid of logic. Pure hazards. Without being there yet, we must prepare for geopolitical equivalents of these *mass shootings* which have been increasing in the United States since the 2010s.

I have long looked for consistency in Trump's foreign policy. I had to give it up. He is accused of having benefited from Putin's support, but it was he who, from December 2017, began arming the Ukrainians when Obama refused to do so. Trump provided the Ukrainians with the Javelin anti-tank missiles they had been asking for since 2014. These formidable weapons will allow the Ukrainian army to break the Russian offensive towards Kiev in February-March 2022. Nobody knows yet but these missiles are the key which will trap America in the closing trap.

Under Trump, the Blob is no longer just proliferating, but disorganized. The neoconservatives fail to identify with the president of “ *America rst* ”, who through his proclamations seems hostile to any international commitment, to NATO, to war, and puts their careers in danger. Robert Kagan, Republican pillar, disappeared for a moment, but only to reappear after 2020 on the Democratic side. In September 2018, he published a pessimistic book, *The Jungle Grows Back*, which illustrates quite well the new state of mind of the Blob, which I would describe as regressive-violent. Kagan once again unleashes his resentment against the Old World: Japan and Germany only became democracies thanks to the American army (this is not false, only Russia emerged from totalitarianism by its own efforts ). He reiterates that military action remains necessary but in a defensive mode. We find

in this botched book the blind spot of most American geopoliticians:

Kagan denies the economic decline of the United States <sup>9</sup> .

There is certainly now an anti-Chinese line in Washington that unites Republicans and Democrats, but it is initially more of an economic nature and will prove to be a failure. The protectionist turn cannot succeed, because America is already too weak industrially and above all structurally victim of its “ *Super Dutch Disease* ”, the toxic agent of which is, as we have seen, the dollar.

It fails to develop an import substitution industry. In any case, the necessary qualified labor force no longer exists there. We cannot retrain overpaid dentists and workers made unemployed by the automobile decline into producers of integrated microcircuits.

Trump's foreign policy is erratic. On December 6, 2017, he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. For what ? To appeal to the American Jewish electorate? But it is predominantly Democratic and will remain so. To please the evangelists? But the latter ceased to exist as a political force. A fad, then? Why not ? On May 8, 2018, he announced that the United States was withdrawing from the Iran nuclear agreement and that the “level of economic sanctions against Iran would be as high as possible.” To please Israel? To raise the price of oil, knowing that American oil companies are rather Republican? Why not ? We could also explain the sanctions against Venezuela in the same way: they increase the price of oil, for which the United States reached a zero net balance in 2018. But precisely, a zero balance means that the financial gain is also for the country, even if the support of the oil price is pleasant, internally, for Texan oil companies. Zero morality? I'm not even ruling out the possibility that Trump felt childish pleasure in saying “no!” “, “ well done ! » or “prout!” » as so many new modalities of American foreign policy. Nevertheless, in a final access

lucidity, Trump signed a withdrawal agreement from Afghanistan with the Taliban in Doha on February 29, 2020.

The inconsistency continued until the end of his mandate. He has threatened to leave NATO, but this does not prevent the Alliance from expanding further by absorbing Montenegro in 2017 and North Macedonia in 2020.

Joe Biden was elected in November 2020. He initially seemed to reconnect with the reasonable state of mind of Barack Obama. American troops will withdraw from Afghanistan on August 30, 2021 (under the agreement negotiated by Trump). The evacuation took place in shameful conditions, but we have been used to it since the fall of Saigon. There was even something reassuring about an old-fashioned American debacle. Biden resumes negotiations with Iran. He is once again polite with Europeans. There is nothing to suggest that he would adopt a more aggressive posture towards Russia. Ukraine's rearmament, however, continues. In the context of decomposition, both state and social, of the United States (let us not forget the assault on the Capitol by Trump supporters on January 6, 2021), we can hazard the hypothesis of a State which is splitting into its various organs – the army, the police, the navy, the intelligence services, etc. –, which now act without control or coordination. The idea of a “blobization” of the State comes to mind.

The United States (or its component parts) are drawn into Europe against their will. The German problem: work on Nord Stream 2 ends around the end of 2021, symbol of this German-Russian agreement that the Blob so fears. Above all, Ukrainian nationalism is gaining strength. The Kiev government is pursuing its impossible, and therefore nihilistic, dream of recovering Donbass and Crimea and re-enslaving (or expelling) Russian populations by prohibiting them from using their language. It not only behaves as if Ukraine were a *de facto* member of NATO (as Mearsheimer rightly noted),

but also as if NATO were an offensive alliance serving its *de facto* members !

The Russians' mistrust is then fully justified: towards the end of 2021, a Ukrainian attack is in preparation. But, at this stage, the White House is not the sponsor. This or that branch of the CIA, perhaps, I don't know. The fact remains that Washington will find itself trapped, in a few weeks, in a generalized conflict.

On December 17, 2021, Putin wrote to the Atlantic Alliance asking for written guarantees on Ukraine. On January 26, 2022, Blinken responds: "There is no change, there will be no change. » This does not mean that NATO will attack.

Putin was well aware that the American administration could not accept the principle of guarantees and reveal its weakness by giving in to what was in fact an ultimatum. Blinken therefore did what Putin expected of him: he said "no". Russia enters the war at the time of its choosing. The Russians had assessed the forces present and decided that, for military and demographic reasons, they would have an optimal firing window between 2022 and 2027. Russia had certainly underestimated the potential of the Ukrainian army, but not the very weak industrial potential of NATO.

Kyiv's effective resistance, which created the illusion that a Western victory was possible, was the ultimate tragedy for the United States. The first successes of the Ukrainians turned the head of a Blob maneuvered by the neoconservatives. The withdrawal of the Russians from northern Ukraine, the success of the Ukrainian counter-offensives in the fall of 2022, to the South towards Kherson, to the East in the Kharkiv oblast, allowed militarism to mentally invade the House- White. The dynamic of war had become irresistible, because war is, always and everywhere, one of the virtualities of nihilism. The American military reux of the years 2008-2016 was reasonable, but fragile, because it intervened

moment when a nihilism was germinating which, suddenly, in 2022, began to vibrate in phase with Ukrainian nihilism.

The ephemeral military successes of Ukrainian nationalism have launched the United States into a bidding war from which it cannot escape without suffering a defeat, no longer simply local, but global: military, economic and ideological. The defeat now would be: the German-Russian rapprochement, the dedollarization of the world, the end of imports paid for by the “internal collective printing press”, great poverty.

But I'm not at all sure that people in Washington are aware of this. Let us even pray that they are not and prove capable of concluding a peace which they would believe only announces, for them and for kyiv, another Saigon, another Baghdad or another Kabul.

America's sociological zero state, however, prevents us from making reasonable predictions about the ultimate decisions its leaders will make. Let us keep in mind that nihilism makes everything, absolutely everything, possible.

*Doëlan, September 30, 2023.*

1. Andrei P. Tsygankov, *The Dark Double. US Media, Russia and the Politics of Values*, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 74.

2. R. Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, *op. cit.*

3. A. Tsygankov, *The Dark Double*, *op. cit.*

4. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

5. Hans Kundnani, *The Paradox of German Power*, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 57-59.

6. See my interview with Olivier Berruyer, “Germany holds the continent European”, published on the *Les Crises website*, in September 2014.

7. Emmanuel Todd, “The Coming Crisis Between the US and Germany”, lecture delivered at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in February 2016. I announced the coming of a conflict between Germany and the United States .

8. Quoted by Pierre Melandri in “Americans First: the geopolitics of the Biden administration”, *Foreign Policy*, 3-2021.

**9. R. Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.**

## POSTSCRIPT

### ***American nihilism: proof from Gaza***

The three weeks following the resumption of the conflict between Israel and Hamas, on October 7, 2023, showed us, in its raw, instinctual state, Washington's preference for violence. Faced with a war which, on both sides, killed mainly civilians, the United States immediately weighed in favor of a worsening of the conflict.

On October 8, they moved a first aircraft carrier to the Eastern Mediterranean to support Israel, followed by a second on October 14. This instinctive reaction did not correspond to any military necessity. Who could believe in an Iranian attack? Israel has nuclear weapons, Iran does not.

Joe Biden then made a solidarity visit to Tel Aviv and on his return, on October 20, delivered a childishly simple speech: Hamas = Putin, Israel = Ukraine. He forgot that there live in Israel nearly a million citizens from Russia, very attached to their original culture, and who cannot understand, whatever the Western media say, nor the eradication of the Russian language carried out by Kiev, nor the Nazi symbols of Ukrainian extremists. Washington's indifference to concrete Israelis



is fascinating. It is from an imaginary country that the United States comes declare solidarity without limits.

On October 27, 2023, the United States refused to vote on the resolution aimed at establishing “an immediate, lasting and prolonged humanitarian truce” proposed by Jordan. However, one hundred and twenty nations voted for, forty-five abstained and only fourteen voted against – Israel, the United States, Fiji, Tonga, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Guatemala, as well as Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Croatia (the ghost of the Austro-Hungarian Empire?). The American vote against the truce is nihilistic, it rejects the common morality of humanity.

The majority of Westerners abstain, including those from the American axis in Europe, such as the United Kingdom, Poland and Ukraine. France, Norway, Ireland, Spain and Portugal approve the Jordanian motion, alongside Russia and China. Germany abstains, a choice which, however, attenuates its traditional attitude in principle favorable to Israel.

The dealignment of Westerners undoubtedly reveals, as much as the persistence of ordinary morality (the massacres of civilians must stop), a recurrence of fear in the face of the strategic irresponsibility of the United States. Because with this vote, the United States decided, in the midst of the Ukrainian war, to immediately and permanently alienate the Muslim world.

The least worrying interpretation would present US support for the war against Hamas as a way of making people forget, and themselves, that they are losing the war in Ukraine. Finally, a theater of operations where they could act freely, without fear of Russian reprisals, bomb Syria a little more, perhaps one day Iran. The Eastern Mediterranean is in fact the only sea where American aircraft carriers remained operational since Chinese hypersonic missiles made them obsolete weapons for the defense of Taiwan. Alas, Vladimir Putin, from October 18, dispatches over the sea

**Black surveillance MiGs armed with Kinjal missiles, capable of hitting these aircraft carriers in five to ten minutes.**

**The Western press, which had fed us for months with the illusion of a victorious Ukrainian counter-offensive, was, without any possible dispute, relieved to have to turn its attention to this new war.**

**As far as the United States is concerned, the concept of nihilism allows us to go further in the interpretation: their thoughtless and unqualified commitment to Israel is a suicidal symptom.**

**NATO is at war. We saw in [Chapter 11](#) that the majority of non-Western countries (the Rest of the World) lean in favor of Russia and that their refusal to respect Western sanctions had allowed the Russian economy to hold on. We have seen Saudi Arabia consult with Russia to manage the price of oil, reconcile with Iran (Russia's ally), under the benevolent supervision of China (Russia's ally). NATO is also losing the industrial war, having proven incapable of producing munitions and missiles in sufficient quantities. At the beginning of October 2023, the failure of the Ukrainian summer counter-offensive was known to everyone and people began to speculate about a collapse of kyiv's army. However, it is in this context that the American government has chosen to weaken the Muslim world's support for Russia. The Biden administration's hawkish posture, extended from Ukraine to the Middle East, has given Russia, which is nevertheless at war, the possibility of appearing as a force for peace. For the Arab world, it is now the only possible shield against renewed violence from the United States. Washington's preference for war leads us to imagine that one day the Israelis, tired of their endless war, will ultimately turn to Russia, to which they are humanly close, to help them escape the quagmire of reprisals. .**

**If we want to anticipate America's strategic choices, we must therefore, urgently, abandon the axiom of rationality. The United States is not looking for gains by assessing costs. In the village of Washington, in the land of mass shootings, in the age of zero religion, the primary impulse is a need for violence.**

***October 30, 2023.***

## LIST OF MAPS AND TABLES

### Map 2.1

*The urban network in Ukraine in 2001*

### Map 2.2

*Population density in Ukraine around 2020*

### Map 2.3

*The 2010 Ukrainian elections: votes for Yanukovich*

### Map 2.4 *The*

*decline of urban populations in Ukraine from 1989 to 2012*

### Map 2.5

*The decline of the general Ukrainian population from 1989 to 2012*

### Map 2.6

*The 2014 Ukrainian elections: votes for Poroshenko*

### Map 2.7

*The abstention rate in the Ukrainian elections in 2014*

### Map 2.8

*Where do Ukrainian elites come from?*

**Table 1**

[\*Ukrainian elites\*](#)

**Table 2**

[\*Country of origin of foreigners living in Germany in 2022\*](#)

**Figure 6.1 *Life***

[\*expectancy since 1960 in the West and China\*](#)

**Table 3**

[\*The ten countries receiving the most doctorates between 2001 and 2020 in the United States\*](#)  
[\*United\*](#)

**Map 11.1**

[\*Attitude of States on March 7, 2022 in favor or not of sanctions against Russia\*](#)

**Map 11.2**

[\*The rate of patrilineality in the world\*](#)

**Map 11.3**

[\*Homophobia around the world\*](#)

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SOCIAL, *CNRS Éditions*, 2020



## CONTENTS

### Introduction.

The ten surprises of war \_\_\_\_\_

1. Russian stability \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Ukrainian enigma \_\_\_\_\_

3. In Eastern Europe, a postmodern Russophobia \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the West? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Assisted suicide in Europe \_\_\_\_\_

6. In Great Britain: towards nation zero (Croule Britannia) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Scandinavia: from feminism to warmongering \_\_\_\_\_

8. The true nature of America: oligarchy and nihilism \_\_\_\_\_

9. Destroy the American economy \_\_\_\_\_

10. The Washington Gang \_\_\_\_\_

11. Why the Rest of the World chose Russia \_\_\_\_\_

### Conclusion.

How the United States fell \_\_\_\_\_

into the Ukraine trap \_\_\_\_\_

### Postscript.

American nihilism: proof from Gaza \_\_\_\_\_

LIST OF MAPS AND TABLES \_\_\_\_\_

Emmanuel Todd

## **THE DEFEAT FROM THE WEST**

The implosion of the USSR set history in motion again. It had plunged Russia into a violent crisis. Above all, it had created a global vacuum which sucked in America, even though it was itself in crisis since 1980. A paradoxical movement was then triggered: the conquering expansion of a West which was withering away at its heart.

The disappearance of Protestantism led America, in stages, from neo-liberalism to nihilism; and Britain, from financialization to loss of sense of humor. The zero state of religion has led the European Union to suicide but Germany should be resurrected.

Between 2016 and 2022, Western nihilism merged with that of Ukraine, born from the decomposition of the Soviet sphere. Together, NATO and Ukraine came up against a stabilized Russia, once again a great power, now conservative, reassuring for the Rest of the world which does not want to follow the West in its adventure. Russian leaders decided on a standstill battle: they defied NATO and invaded Ukraine.

Mobilizing the resources of critical economics, religious sociology and the anthropology of the depths, Emmanuel Todd offers us a tour of the real world, from Russia to Ukraine, from the former popular democracies to Germany, from Great Britain at

Scandinavia and the United States, without forgetting the Rest of the world whose choice decided the outcome of the war.

*Emmanuel Todd is an anthropologist, historian and essayist. From him, Éditions Gallimard notably published After the Empire (2002) and After Democracy (2008).*

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