

Chapter 3: The Global Right

I/ “Neoliberals against Europe”

(Slobodian & Plehwe, “Neoliberals Against Europe”, in *Mutant Neoliberalism: Market Rule and Political Rupture*, 2020).

Neoliberalism = an example of elite/intellectual mobilization.

Mount Pèlerin Society (1947).

Association of scholars (economists, philosophers, historians), including Nobel Prizes: **Friedrich Hayek** (1899-1992), chair of MPS (1947-1961)

Austrian school of economics

Milton Friedman (1912-2006)

Chicago school of economics



About The Mont Pelerin Society

The Mont Pelerin Society is composed of persons who continue to see the dangers to civilized society outlined in the statement of aims. They have seen economic and political liberalism in the ascendant for a time since World War II in some countries but also its apparent decline in more recent times.

Though not necessarily sharing a common interpretation, either of causes or consequences, they see danger in the expansion of government, not least in state welfare, in the power of trade unions and business monopoly, and in the continuing threat and reality of inflation.

Again without detailed agreements, the members see the Society as an effort to interpret in modern terms the fundamental principles of economic society as expressed by those classical economists, political scientists, and philosophers who have inspired many in Europe, America and throughout the Western World.

Slobodian & Plehwe: logical fallacy.

'To say that the EU has been neoliberal in its outcome does not imply ipso facto that neoliberal actors were responsible for its genesis. Scholars have rightly emphasized the need to distinguish between the use of the category of neoliberalism as a description of a historical period or variety of capitalism, on the one hand, and an organized intellectual and political movement rooted in the Mont Pèlerin Society, on the other.'

German ordo-liberalism as an inspiration for EU integration (social market economy).

Walter Eucken (1891-1950).

Common point between ordo-liberalism and neoliberalism: emphasis on the role of the state (government) to ensure free market (but rejection of welfare state).

Guarantee:

- Free circulation of goods, capitals, labour, and services.
- Competition to attract investment and productive people.

Brexit referendum, 2016.

'the intellectuals, think tankers and policy entrepreneurs organized in the actual existing neoliberal movement since the early 1990s have more often been the EU's critics than its champions. While the Left has seen the EU as an austerity machine, the most engaged neoliberals have seen it as a framework for socialist expansion.'

Reactions against Jaques Delors' Commission in the early 1990s ('left-leaning federalism').

Establishment of eurosceptic think tanks.

The Bruges Group (1989)

The European Constitutional Group (1992)

The Center for the New Europe (1993)

The European Science and Environment Forum (1994).

Thatcher, Europe as a 'family of nations'.

Opposition to 'social Europe'.

Alliances with Eastern European partners after 1989.

Model of Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise Institute: combine free markets with traditional morality.



“

The Bruges Speech
20 September 1988

“Willing and active cooperation between independent sovereign states is the best way to build a successful European Community.”



“To try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the centre of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging and would jeopardise the objectives we seek to achieve.”



*‘A change emerged in the years after the **Maastricht Treaty** (1992) and the move to the introduction of the Euro in 1999. While some Eurosceptic neoliberals retained hope for a reformed union, others began forging alliances with cultural nationalist parties. In the process, their opposition to Europe became more absolute, culminating in calls like the Brexit campaign for secession from both the European Monetary Union and the EU itself.’*

Vidéos ▶ Tout lire



From the Bruges group’s YouTube channel:

‘Brexit and the National Interest’

‘How the Rise of the Administrative State is Undermining Democracy’

‘From Bruges to Brexit: The vision that best serves the British National Interest’

‘Is Immigration in the National Interest?’

‘A dividing line was created between those neoliberals who felt supranational governance was necessary to defend overall economic order and right-wing neoliberals who felt that such an order must be anchored more soundly in national states. Neither were opposed to an active role for the state per se. The disagreement was about whether a central European bank or national central banks were the most effective site for monetary management.’

Political alliances between neoliberals and radical right parties.

AfD, protest against Germany’s position in the eurozone crisis.

‘The closed-borders libertarianism of nationalist neoliberals like the AfD is not a rejection of globalism but is a variety of it.’



European Alliance of Conservatives and Reformers (2009).

European Conservatives and Reformists.

New Direction (think tank).

'The decision of the British Conservative party along with the Czech ODS and the Polish PiS to end their traditional cooperation with the majority conservatives and social democrats in the European Parliament marked a break with the integration policy of the past. The new formation introduced a conservative perspective with no ties to the previous policy of integration.'

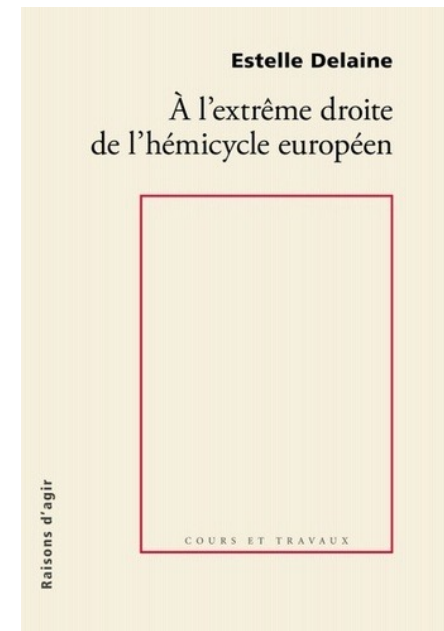
Conscious of the urgent need to reform the EU on the basis of Eurorealism, Openness, Accountability and Democracy, in a way that respects the sovereignty of our nations and concentrates on economic recovery, growth and competitiveness, the European Conservatives and Reformists Group shares the following principles:

- Free enterprise, free and fair trade and competition, minimal regulation, lower taxation, and small government as the ultimate catalysts for individual freedom and personal and national prosperity.
- Freedom of the individual, more personal responsibility and greater democratic accountability.
- Sustainable, clean energy supply with an emphasis on energy security.
- The importance of the family as the bedrock of society.
- The sovereign integrity of the nation state, opposition to EU federalism and a renewed respect for true subsidiarity.
- The overriding value of the transatlantic security relationship in a revitalised NATO, and support for young democracies across Europe.
- Effectively controlled immigration and an end to abuse of asylum procedures.
- Efficient and modern public services and sensitivity to the needs of both rural and urban communities.
- An end to waste and excessive bureaucracy and a commitment to greater transparency and probity in the EU institutions and use of EU funds.
- Respect and equitable treatment for all EU countries, new and old, large and small.

Transnational dimension: establishment of a new European right. Role of the EP in this respect (Datta, Delaine).

'In a painful irony, the directly elected members of European parliament, originally intended to help bridge the so-called democratic deficit and legitimate Europe-wide governance, ended up offering a stage to those suspicious of the European project as such. Although there was already a robust transnational network of Eurosceptic right-wing parties by 1994, few scholars paid attention or took them seriously as part of the system of national and transnational European civil society. The fact that the hurdle for a seat in the European parliament is only 3% (as opposed to 5% in the German Bundestag) lowered the barriers to entry for protest parties.'

Neil Datta, 'Tip of the Iceberg. Religious Extremist Funders against Human Rights For Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Europe (2009-2018)', European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights: <https://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Tip%20of%20the%20Iceberg%20June%202021%20Final.pdf>



II/ Case-study: the International of conservative intellectuals

A Global Right? Or illiberal, or reactionary, or conservative International?

Cf. European Parliament, CPAC.



Burgeoning literature:

Rita Abrahamsen et al., *World of the Right: Radical Conservatism and Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024).

Mihai Varga & Aron Buzogány, “The Two Faces of the ‘Global Right’: Revolutionary Conservatives and National-Conservatives”, *Critical Sociology*, 48-6, 2022.

Roman Kuhar & David Paternotte (eds.), *Anti-gender campaigns in Europe: mobilizing against equality* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017).

My work:

Sociology of intellectuals/intellectual history.

Top-down approach to the mainstreaming of the far right.

Ideological reconfiguration of the global Right (in the illiberal moment) and radicalization of conservatism.

Transnational and comparative perspective, decentred (focus on Central Europe: Poland and Hungary).

I/ The International of conservative intellectuals: a decentred approach

- Transnational networks of intellectuals.
- Attracted by illiberal regimes in Hungary and Poland since the 2010s.
- Transnational production and circulation of ‘intellectual conservatism’ (Centre for European Renewal, Natcon, New Direction, *The European Conservative*) and its radicalization.

<https://nationalconservatism.org/natcon-brussels-2/about/>

From NatCon London 2023:



INTERVIEW

“There is nothing extreme about resistance to invasion”: An Interview with **Renaud Camus**

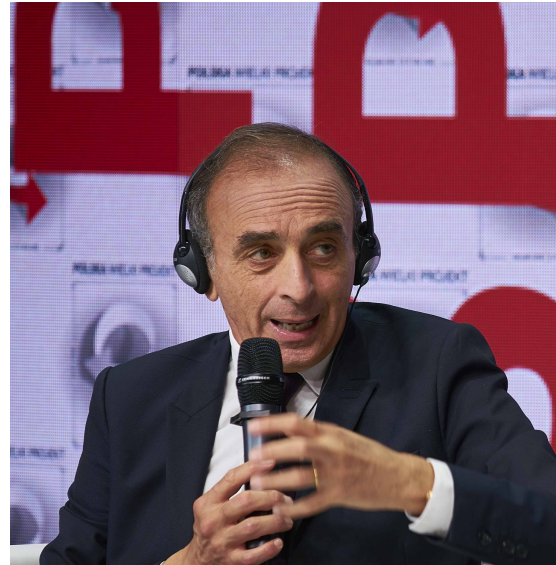
“Since the Great Replacement is by far the most important phenomenon of contemporary Western societies, and also the most obvious, it is precisely that which one must under no circumstances name. Those who venture to do so must be silenced by any means necessary.”

Louis Betty, interviewer; Ethan Rundell, translator — August 16, 2024

[.com/watch?v=FlMkqUyrSl0](https://nationalconservatism.org/watch?v=FlMkqUyrSl0)

[.com/watch?v=SVr4Ws6ImkI](https://nationalconservatism.org/watch?v=SVr4Ws6ImkI)





2/ The illiberal impulse

- Danube Institute (Budapest, 2013).
- John O'Sullivan.
- Budapest Demographic Summit (depuis 2015).
- Mathias Corvinus Collegium.
- *Polska Wielki Projekt*.
- Ordo Iuris.
- Collegium Intermarium.

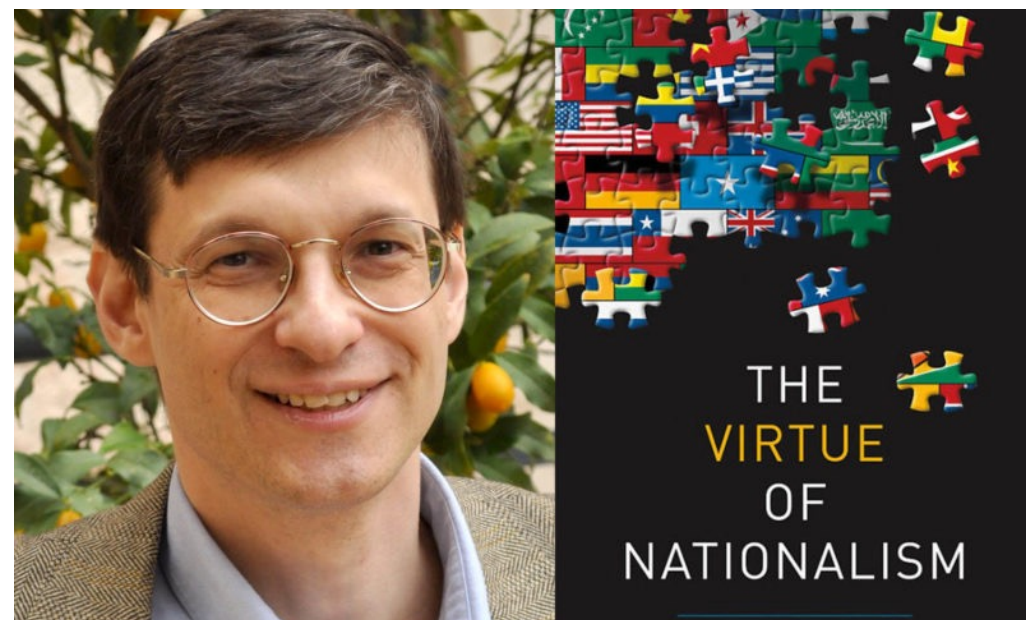
Postliberal Order

Wokism is the New Face of An Old Heresy, And It Can Be Defeated Again

Philosopher Ed Feser argues that the new “higher gnosis” of woke ideology, pseudo-religion and anti-politics is a lot like an older gnosticism which was once defeated – and can be again.

3/ The role of the US Right

- Ideological reconfiguration (Tea Party, Trump, ...).
- NatCon conferences.
- Yoram Hazony (Edmund Burke Foundation).
- Postliberalism (A. Vermeule, P. Deneen, G. Pappin).



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4/ The role of the European Union

- EU enlargement (2004), euroscepticism.
- Key role of British Tories.
- Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR), 2009.
- European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR): PiS, ODS, Fratelli d'Italia, Vox, Swedish Democrats, ...
- New Direction (think tank).



A broad definition of ‘intellectual’, in terms of profession.

- Scholars (public intellectuals and think tankers): Delsol, Kinneging.
- Think tankers (often with a foot in academia): Blond, Puppinck.
- Columnists/pundits: Murray, Dreher.
- Scholars-politicians: Legutko, Krasnodebski, Joch.

Intellectuals characterized by:

- Engagement (intervention).
- Multipositionality (links with political parties and civil society organizations).
- Repertoires (practices) of intellectual intervention: ‘fast thinkers’, essayists, publicists.

A common strategy: ‘Right-wing Gramscianism’ (metapolitics).



II/ The transnational circulation of ideas

Focus on ‘international’ guests in Hungary and Poland.

4 organisations:

- Mathias Corvinus Collegium (Budapest): visiting fellows.
- Danube Institute (Budapest): visiting fellows.
- Collegium Intermarium (Warsaw): faculty staff and guest speakers.
- *Polska Wielki Projekt* (Warsaw): participants to the conference.



“Visiting fellows” of Mathias Corvinus Collegium (Budapest)



Thibaud Gibelin

French historian; political scientist

Guest Speaker, Visiting Fellow

Thibaud Gibelin is enrolled in a doctoral thesis in political science at the University of Paris Est-Créteil. His research is focused on the reaffirmation of politics in Europe, through recent developments in Hungary. In 2020, he published his first essay: *Pourquoi Viktor Orbán joue et gagne* [Why Viktor Orbán Plays and Wins], by Fauves Editions. After studying history and political science, Thibaud Gibelin worked mainly in the European Parliament, but also in Moscow and finally as a teacher in a private high school.

Visiting Fellow at MCC: September 2021 – July 2023

Examples: Rod Dreher, Gladden Pappin, Werner Patzelt, Christopher Rufo, ...



Francesco Giubilei

Italian author and professor; president, Fondazione Tatarella; founder, Nazione Futura; journalist, Il Giornale; professor, University G. Fortunato in Benevento

Visiting Fellow

Francesco Giubilei is an author, publisher, and professor based in Italy. He is the President of the Italian Conservative foundation, Fondazione Tatarella, and the founder of the think tank, Nazione Futura. He also teaches at the University G. Fortunato of Benevento. Mr. Giubilei was recently included in Forbes's list of 100 most influential youths in Italy under 30. He has authored eight books including *The History of European Conservative Thought* (his first work to be published in English). His writings frequently appear in the Italian daily, *Il Giornale*, *The American Conservative*, and *The European Conservative*; magazines.

“Visiting fellows” of Danube Institute (Budapest)



Visiting Fellows



ROD DREHER

Visiting Fellow, Director of Network Project
(2021-)



DR. PETER BOGHOSSIAN

Visiting Fellow (2025)



SEAN NOTTOLI

Visiting Fellow (2025)



PHILIP PILKINGTON

Visiting Fellow (2024-)

Examples: Ofir Haivry, Douglas Murray, Jonathan Price, Erik Tegnér,

...

Faculty staff and guest speakers of Collegium Intermarium



MCC
MATHIAS CORVINUS COLLEGIUM

COLLEGIUM INTERMARIUM

CENTER FOR
FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

03 / 18 / 2025
Tuesday 4 PM

Scruton MCC
3-7 Tas vezér utca,
Budapest 1113

**The Future of the
European Union**
*National Sovereignty or
Centralization?*

Great Reset Presentation

JERZY KWASNIESKI
PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE DREDO
KING INSTITUTE

RODRIGO BALLESTER
HEAD OF THE CENTER FOR EUROPEAN
STUDIES AT MCC

MIKLÓS SZÁNTHÓ
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE CENTER
FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

MODERATOR: **DAMILLE DEVENYI**
RESEARCHER AT THE CENTER FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES AT MCC

Examples: Rod Dreher, Francesco Giubilei, Andreas Kinneking, András Láncki, Grégor Puppinc, ...



Participants in *Polska Wielki Projekt*



14:00

Roots of Hope – Future of Conservatism

Partnerem panelu jest New Direction



Paneliści:

Zbigniew Stawrowski

Profesor, filozof polityki

Mary Eberstadt

Catholic Information Center oraz Faith & Reason Institute

Bronisław Wildstein

Pisarz, eseista, publicysta

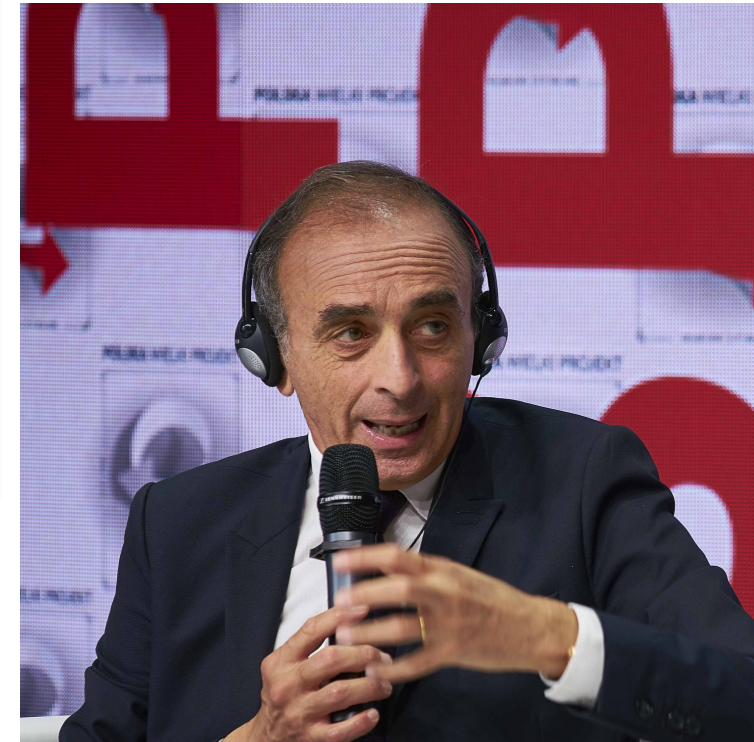
Moderator:

Michał Łuczewski

Tłumaczenia:

angielski

Examples: Patrick Deneen, David Engels, Jonathan Price , Roger Scruton, Adrian Vermeule, Éric Zemmour, ...



A rather small, but genuine **transnational intellectual scene**.

A common ideological/discursive universe?

Transnational productions:

- Manifestos (The Paris Statement, NatCon Statement of Principles).
 - *The European Conservative*.
- ⇒ Illiberalism, critique of liberalism = the “glue” that puts them together.

Common ideological elements:

- (muted) Critique of neoliberalism (in its globalized variety).
- Reform of the education system (“the Good, the True and the Beautiful”).
- Identity (nation, family, religion). Nationalism, Western civilisation.
- Rejection of non-European (non-white) immigration/population.

⇒ Inegalitarian and elitist worldview. Euphemistic form of racism (often culturalized).

PRINCIPLES

Europe's conservative movement is as diverse as the continent itself, reflecting variations in language, culture, society, religion, and history. A range of historical and geographical factors have contributed to the emergence of conservative traditions in Europe. These traditions are much more varied—and fractured—than in the Anglosphere. Nevertheless, the development of strong, coherent conservative traditions has sustained many European nations through difficult times. It is our contention that these discrete strands together compose the fabric of a common European conservative tradition.

The working group is rediscovering a common understanding of conservatism in Europe and have thus far settled on the following principles.



Why conservatism?

Conservatism = opposition to the contestation of traditional, religious, moral or state authorities.

⇒ Restoring (political or religious) tradition; organicist conception of the social world.

‘*Longue durée*’ in the history of conservatism: complicated relationship with liberalism and democracy (cf. Edmund Fawcett).

‘Liberal-conservative’, ‘fusionist’ consensus = after WWII and Cold War.

Older, less liberal and less democratic ideological references: counter-revolutionaries (Burke, De Maistre), radical conservative thinkers inclined towards fascism (‘German conservative revolution’: Carl Schmitt, Oswald Spengler, ... ; Maurras in France).

After WWII: rebranding of the ‘Conservative Revolution’ by the European New Right (Armin Mohler, Alain de Benoist).

Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind* (2011): conservatism as a reactive ideology, of which inequality constitutes the core idea, formulated against diverse and changing enemies: the Enlightenment philosophy, 1968, ‘cultural Marxism’ the ‘progressives’ or ‘liberals’, ‘gender ideology’, the rule of law, ... adapting to a context.

Struggle for the legitimate definition of conservatism. Radicalisation of conservatism

Broadening the scope of conservatism:

- Ideology: in its various shades, including its radical form (racism, exclusion, political violence, authoritarian practices).
- Politics: Blurring (or redefinition) of the boundary between the conservative right and the radical right.

Contributes to the ideological (and partisan) reconfiguration of the right.

COMMENTARY, DREHER

Charlie Kirk Shows the West the Way Home

Do we have the courage to turn away from this culture of death that European and American elites tried to build without God?

Rod Dreher

— September 23, 2025

COMMENTARY

Students in Memory of Charlie Kirk: A Joint Statement

Signatures:

Organizations:

[La Cocarde étudiante](#) (France)

[Azione Universitaria](#) (Italy)

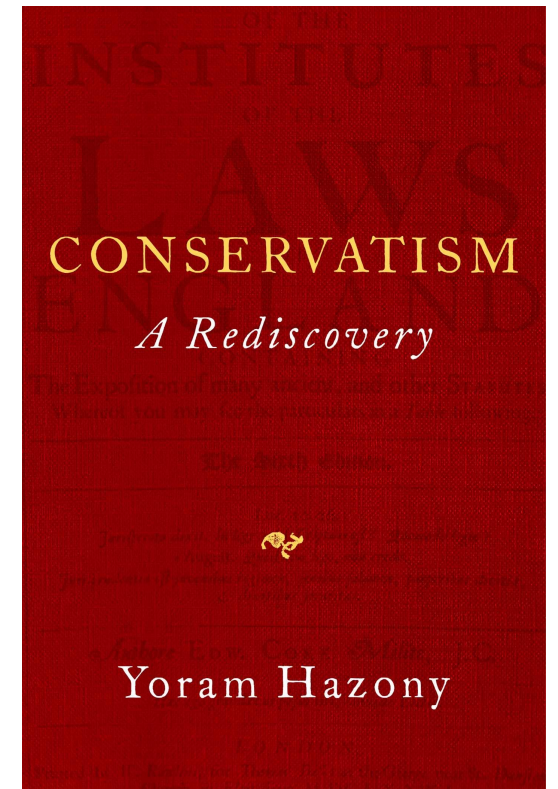
[Alternativa Estudiantil](#) (Spain)

[KVHV](#) Gent, Leuven, and Antwerpen (Flanders)

[College Republicans of America](#) (USA)

[Ring Freiheitlicher Studenten](#) (Austria)

[Vrijmoedige Studentenpartij](#) (Netherlands)



The limitations of the transnational circulation of ideas

The case of France.

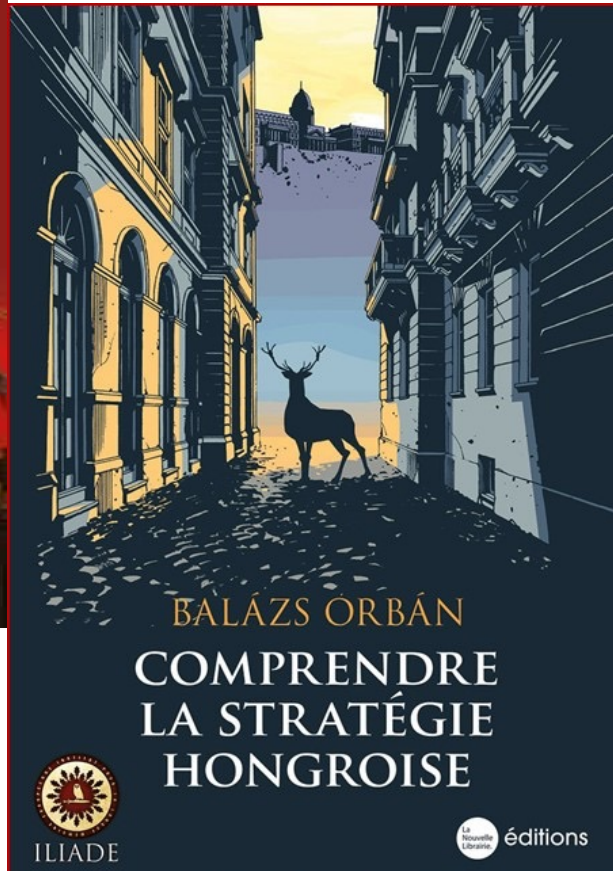
MAX-ERWANN GASTINEAU

Le Nouveau procès de l'Est

Thibaud Gibelin

Pourquoi Viktor Orbán joue et gagne

Résurgence de l'Europe centrale



« Nous n'avons pas adopté une attitude défensive, et nous ne nous sommes pas résignés à notre statut minoritaire ; nous avons joué pour gagner et avons proclamé la Reconquista. » VIKTOR ORBÁN



L'Ambassade de Hongrie en France
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Mme **Chantal Delsol**, philosophe

M. **Charles Gave**, président de l'Institut Des Libertés

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The limitations of the transnational circulation of ideas

French guests in Hungary and Poland = low-key, peripheral, in the French intellectual (Gastineau, Gibelin) and political (Bay, Chauprade) fields.

Same goes for Natcon (Maréchal, Zemmour, but not Le Pen).

Several French journalist, mainly from fringe far right media: Erik Tegnér (*Livre noir*, *Frontières*), Claude Chollet (*Observatoire du journalisme*), Eugénie Bastié, *Atlantico*, *Breizh info*, *Salon beige*.

But law professors (Anne-Marie Le Pourhiet, Bertrand Mathieu) known for their critique of international courts and a dubious understanding of the rule of law.

Genuine but limited influence of Central European illiberalism on the French landscape (so far).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The shift in neoliberal Eurosceptic organization from 1988 to the 2010s as a **passage from reform to radicalism**, from demands for conservative reconstruction to separatism and secession.

Global civil society is not a harmonious field of like-minded NGOs. It is a contentious arena riven by fundamental differences criss-crossing national and international borders.

Electoral campaigns of the Tea Party, Donald Trump, radical Right parties in Europe have been generously financed by groups within the upper classes that have also been pivotal in the construction of a global radical right (Bob, 2012).

The ultra-conservative positions of the Western so-called ‘anti-gender movements’ have been sponsored by religious leaders – including in the Vatican (Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017). This casts some doubts on the consideration of the backlash as presenting a rupture with dominant discourses.

Reconfiguration of the Global Right along illiberal lines, thanks to growing transnational interconnections.