

Thatcher cites Christian values against 'Europe 92'

by Mark Burdman

A remarkable political intervention into continental Europe by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during the week of Sept. 19 has created hysteria among the supranationalists at European Community headquarters in Brussels who are behind the corporatist "Europe 1992" plan. In that year, all customs barriers are to be dropped among the 12 EC nations, and the continent "integrated" under a bankers' dictatorship, aligned with Russia.

In speeches in Bruges, Belgium, and Luxembourg, on Sept. 20 and 21, respectively, Mrs. Thatcher attacked the idea of a supranational "United States of Europe" as a "nightmare" and a "folly," and invoked a contrary, positive idea of Europe as the radiation-point for great culture and the highest values of Christendom around the world. She identified this positive culture, as that which divides Western civilization from the culture imposed on Eastern European nations by the Soviet empire.

This quality of political ideas has not been expressed by a political leader in Europe since the time of France's President Charles de Gaulle. The idea that a British prime minister would revive de Gaulle's conception of a Europe of "independent, sovereign nation-states," and throw cold water on the utopian notion of a "common European house" advocated both by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov and appeasers in the West, is indeed a "nightmare" for the architects of the "Europe 1992" plan.

The intervention at the College of Europe in Bruges was a classic case of "bearding the lions in their den." The college is an important training center for European-integrationist bureaucrats and ideologues, and Thatcher's audience was predominantly a hardcore "Europe 1992" constituency. She began her speech with a joke, that having invited her to speak on the subject of "Britain and Europe" would seem to some

like "inviting Genghis Khan to speak on the virtues of peaceful coexistence."

Mrs. Thatcher contrasted two concepts of Europe. One, which she supported, was a Europe of "independent, sovereign nations," a "family of nations . . . but relishing our national identity no less than our common European endeavors." This would be a Europe which "looks outward, not inward, and which preserves that Atlantic Community, that Europe on both sides of the Atlantic, which is our noblest inheritance and greatest strength." Her central "guiding principle" for the Europe of the future, Mrs. Thatcher stressed, was "willing and active cooperation" between sovereign states. With this view, Mrs. Thatcher endorsed the "Europe of the fatherlands" conception of de Gaulle, as she had previously done in a late-July interview on the British Broadcasting Corporation. (See "Thatcher endorses de Gaulle against fascist 'Europe 1992,'" *EIR*, Vol. 15, No. 32, Aug. 12, 1988.) The contrary idea of Europe would be a "European super-state exercising a new dominance."

Said Mrs. Thatcher, "To try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the center of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging and jeopardize objectives we seek to achieve. Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions, and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identical European personality." She derided the "abstract intellectual concept" involved in such ideas, and attacked the idea of centralizing power in Brussels, where decisions would be taken by an "appointed bureaucracy." This, said Mrs. Thatcher, reminded her of the Soviet Union, which has "tried to run everything from the center," but which is now realizing the ineptness and failure of such an approach!

She also firmly rejected the naive parallels between the mooted “United States of Europe” and the United States of America: “The whole history of America is quite different from Europe. People went there to get away from the intolerance and constraints of life in Europe. They sought liberty and opportunity, and their strong sense of purpose has, over two centuries, helped create a new unity and pride in being American—just as our pride lies in being British or Belgian or Dutch or German.”

Hitting at the fascist essence of these schemes, she asserted, “We in Britain would fight attempts to introduce collectivism and corporatism at the European level.”

In abridged form, but sometimes using even stronger language, she reiterated her attack the next day in Luxembourg, a country that has pretensions of being one of the three “capitals”—together with Brussels and Strasbourg—of a future “federal Europe.” She declared, “A centralized European government would be a nightmare. . . . It would be absurd for us in Europe” to move in such a direction. She attacked the “utopian goals” of “theoreticians” who want to suppress national identity, and insisted, “No, our future must lie in willing and active cooperation between independent sovereign governments, each answerable to their national parliaments.”

The East-West cultural divide

What was new, and stunning, in her Bruges speech, was her invoking of the universality of the values of European Christian civilization, and defining the suppression of these values in Soviet-dominated Europe as the key to the conflict between East and West.

She began by reviewing the historical influence of Europe on Britain and vice versa, and then said:

“Visit the great churches and cathedrals of Britain, read our literature and listen to our language: All bear witness to the cultural riches which we have drawn from Europe—and other Europeans from us. . . .

“From classical and medieval thought, we have borrowed that concept of the rule of law which marks out a civilized society from barbarism.

“And on that idea of Christendom—for long synonymous with Europe—with its recognition of the unique and spiritual nature of the individual, we still base our belief in personal liberty and other human rights.

“Too often, the history of Europe is described as a series of interminable wars and quarrels. Yet from our perspective today, surely what strikes us most is our common experience. For instance, the story of how Europeans explored and colonized and—yes, without apology—civilized much of the world, is an extraordinary tale of talent, skill, and courage. . . .

“The European Community is one manifestation of that European identity. But it is not the only one. We must never forget that, east of the Iron Curtain, peoples who once enjoyed a full share of European culture, freedom, and identity,

have been cut off from their roots. We shall always look at Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest as great European cities.

“Nor should we forget that European values have helped to make the United States of America into the valiant defender of freedom which she has become.”

One London Conservative Party-linked source told this correspondent that Mrs. Thatcher’s support for the diffusion of Western European cultural ideas into Eastern Europe was, in part, a gesture of support for the Ukrainians, Poles, and others whose cultural heritage is integrally linked to the values of European Christendom, but who live under Soviet domination.

The reaction to her speech at Bruges was quick and furious. EC officials told reporters they were “outraged” by her comments. Belgian Foreign Minister Leo Tindemans, a protégé of European federalist ideologues like Jean Monnet and Paul-Henri Spaak, charged Mrs. Thatcher with echoing the ideas of de Gaulle—to which, Mrs. Thatcher responded, “De Gaulle was quite a formidable personality. It’s certainly not an insult.”

Speaking to that BBC from his hospital bed in London, in his capacity as current president of the European Council of Ministers, Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu arrogantly demanded that Mrs. Thatcher “*formally* inform the Commission of her view of Europe.”

Two opposition parliamentarians in Britain accused Mrs. Thatcher of acting like a “soccer hooligan” on the European continent, while Italy’s *La Stampa* charged Sept. 21 that she was like a “bull in a china shop.” From her own Tory Party, Sir Anthony Meyer stated glumly, “The cause of 1992 has been very seriously set back by this.”

As the criticisms mounted, a member of the Thatcher entourage told the *Times* of London, as reported Sept. 22: “We have reached the stage where we don’t give a damn what people say so long as they eventually come round.” This individual insisted that Mrs. Thatcher’s aim was to provoke a wide-ranging and fundamental debate about the future of Europe.

But of all the reactions against Mrs. Thatcher, perhaps the most interesting came from Robert Maxwell, the Soviet-linked publishing magnate, who is chief of Pergamon Press and the Mirror newspaper chain. Speaking to the EC Commission in Brussels Sept. 21, Maxwell condemned Mrs. Thatcher’s views as “an ignorant attempt to try and sabotage a strong and united Europe.” During a day-long series of meetings about European business and communication strategy, Maxwell insisted that “she will not succeed in this endeavor. Indeed, if she persists, she will succeed in being herself defeated within her own party—which is more than we in the Labour Party have achieved in recent years.” He was particularly aghast at Mrs. Thatcher’s intervention on the cultural level, since his associates are moving to *integrate* the cultures of East and West into one oligarchical cultural matrix for Europe, as in Gorbachov’s “common European house.”