

# Decline and Fall of Western Civilization. Philip Giraldi

## Part I

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Theme: [History](#)

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*My wife and I completed a cruise recently that started in Venice, visited islands and historic sites in the Eastern Mediterranean, and concluded in Rome after stops in Valletta, Palermo and Naples. There were inevitably good things and bad things in terms of how the shore excursions were programmed, more bad than good unfortunately, and the costs of the extras provided by the carrier seem to have skyrocketed in the developing post COVID era, apparently making up for the losses sustained in dry dock over the past three years.*

Most of the passengers on our ship were American or Canadian, but there were also large numbers of Europeans and residents of Australia and New Zealand. Being at close quarters with the Europeans in particular provided an interesting opportunity to learn what is driving the Old World to self-destruct like lemmings diving suicidally off the Norwegian cliffs. As both my wife and I are functional in a number of European languages, it also provided a good opportunity to exchange views in a non-threatening way and even to eavesdrop on those nearby in the ship's bars and restaurants when they were discussing political and social developments in their homelands. It was also interesting nevertheless to note how politics intruded into an otherwise a deliberately apolitical experience, with the ship hosting a parade-around-the-deck march to raise money for and celebrate the Ukrainian refugees. My wife and I did not participate.

The days spent in Venice before the cruise began were enlightening, not to mention perilous when I had my pocket picked at a crowded vaporetto stop outside the Accademia Museum. The Filipino waiters in our ship's bar were quite amused to learn that a former CIA officer, who regularly called for "gin martini shaken not stirred," had had his wallet taken, with one bright spark asking "uh, how many people have you killed?" When I was explaining that I had not killed anyone he interrupted to say that "They probably deserved it."

On our first day in Venice, my wife and I noted immediately the large number of formerly highly prestigious shops that were closed in Piazza San Marco, the tourist center of the city

which normally attracts top level clients at top level prices. The signs of economic decline were even more visible the farther away one moved away from San Marco, to include the closure of many restaurants and bars. Italy is struggling, which has led a sharp shift to the right in the recent election. So too Britain, Germany and France are all in trouble and not finding any solutions coming from the hapless band of conniving politicians that have recently been elected. A few more steps downwards and the whole house of cards appears poised to collapse.

Of course, some European politicians are following the easy and approved course endorsed by President Joe Biden, blaming the continent's energy crisis on Vladimir Putin instead of on their own bureaucratic fumbling and failure to protect the interests of their fellow citizens. No European that we met was willing to acknowledge the obvious truth, i.e. that the Ukraine crisis was based on issues that were fully negotiable and the Russian intervention was avoidable. One retired German official whom we met was particularly prone to never speaking ill of any politician. Unless they are Russian or Chinese, that is. He informed us that NATO should make clear its objective to remove Putin because "the man is a fascist" who "wants to recreate the Soviet Union." I demurred that Putin is a nationalist who has been provoked deliberately and there is a difference, but our interlocutor was quickly off on another track, stating that Joe Biden has "done some really good things." When we recovered from the shock of such a ridiculous assertion, I mentioned the arrival of 1.3 million illegal immigrants in the US on Honest Joe's watch plus his toying with nuclear war in support of no known American interest apart from spreading something called "democracy," which the United States no longer has, while also vilifying political opponents as "domestic terrorists." And there is also that little matter of sending billions to Ukraine so it can "win," whatever that means, in order to weaken Russia while also warning of an impending event called "Armageddon."

I also spoke to a number of Italians about their recent election, in which conservative leader of the *Fratelli d'Italia* party Giorgia Meloni led a coalition that will likely make her the new Prime Minister by a comfortable margin. In the Western Media Meloni is regularly and inevitably linked to another former nationalist Italian leader, Benito Mussolini. The malaise of the people I spoke with over Italy's decline was evident. They are watching everything move in the wrong direction, and, to their credit, few of them gave a rat's ass over Ukraine. They did, however, react in their recent voting due to unelected European Union Commissioner Ursula von der Leyen, who, on the eve of the Italian elections, warned Italians that if they voted for the "wrong" i.e. conservative parties they would be punished. Asked about the surge of the right-wing political opposition, she threatened "we will see the result of the vote in Italy. If things go in a difficult direction — and I've spoken about Hungary and Poland — we have the tools."

Beyond that, there did appear to be an age divide in terms of the Italian views relating to the voting and the likely new government. Younger voters several times said to me "It takes us back twenty years," a reference to the more conservative politicians that prevailed at that time. Older voters, however, want the social disruption caused by the mass illegal immigration into the country and the accompanying Islamization to stop and they want protection for Italian jobs and businesses. Many of them mentioned the desire to preserve Italian and Catholic traditional culture. A retired school teacher also sagely observed that Italy should lead the charge in abolishing the European Parliament and getting rid of people like von der Leyen, as the European Union was designed as a free trade zone, not as a progressive dominated body empowered to pass laws and regulations impacting severely on

the economies of member states.

Inevitably, Joe Biden denounced the [Italian election results](#) as a setback where “democracy is at stake” in order to convince US voter to cast their ballots for Democrats. He elaborated “You just saw what’s happened in Italy in that election. You’re seeing what’s happening around the world. And the reason I bother to say that is we can’t be sanguine about what’s happening here, either. I don’t want to exaggerate it, but I don’t want to understate it. And it’s the reason why I’m so concerned about and so interested in and so committed to seeing that the governors — Democratic governors — are elected.” The Biden comment, insulting to the Italians, was not much reported in the US media but was on the receiving end of a great deal of critical commentary in Italy. Several Italians I spoke to mentioned it disparagingly.

And given my own views on the usual very sensitive subject, I asked one Italian official with close ties to *Fratelli d’Italia* why Israel will be getting a pass from the new Prime Minister. Indeed, she, like her counterpart Liz Truss in Britain, embraces [the close relationship](#) with the Jewish state, forgiving its trespasses and crimes against humanity because it is expedient to do so. She also fully embraces the false narrative about Israel vs. the Palestinians. The official responded, with some candor, I thought, that Jews are not very numerous in modern Italy, but they tend to wield power considerably beyond their head count. They are very influential in the media and in some sectors of the economy, in particular, and it pays an ambitious politician to stay on their right side. I responded “Yes, it is the same everywhere, I am afraid.”

Shortly before our cruise ended, Joe Biden stuck his foot in his mouth yet again, and I was interested in hearing what the Europeans thought about the White House’s *National Security Strategy* – a congressionally mandated report supposedly outlining US security goals and foreign policy objectives, but which critic Jordan Schachtel [describes as](#) “...more unhinged than any of its predecessors. The NSS was once understood as a serious document compiling a list of actual threats to the nation. It now resembles a hyper-political Blue Anon fundraising mailer. Most of the items discussed in the supposed threat assessment have nothing to do with national security at all. And the things that are related to national security matters have major prioritization and politicization issues.”

In the document, the Biden administration has declared the intensifying competition with Beijing to be Washington’s biggest challenge and it boasts that “We must proactively shape the international order in line with our interests and values” before adding that “There is nothing beyond our capacity.” The document inevitably stressed the need for “constraining Russia,” and mentions that country 71 times. The Kremlin is described as an “immediate and persistent threat to international peace and stability... The United States will not allow Russia, or any power, to achieve its objectives through using, or threatening to use, nuclear weapons.” The US also has condemned Chinese business practices while simultaneously describing Russia as a “persistent threat” – can the US afford to have such adversaries turned into enemies, given its multiple domestic issues including out of control inflation and debt? Many Europeans are willing to let the US lead on such issues, but they also expressed concern that it would develop into a trade war at minimum and possibly much worse.

To our surprise, our German contact actually agreed that the President’s designation of not one but two major military and economic powers more-or-less as enemies is odd, not to mention seriously schizophrenic in that it contradicts other White House assertions about a global rules-based order based on cooperation. And Biden is taking no steps to mitigate his

warlike talk, having already indicated that [he will not meet](#) with Putin in the upcoming G-20 summit in Indonesia in November. Can it be that because there is a US election coming up there will be another photo op of Joe flanked by Marines in front of Independence Hall bathed in red light and waving his tiny fist around?

I do not want to suggest that people who go on cruises are representative of anything beyond their demographic, i.e. moderately affluent and reasonably well educated by modern standards. But it is nevertheless interesting to observe how the Europeans generally are inclined to defer to what they know to be half-truths coming out of their governments. Europe will surely sink or swim in the upcoming year or two as soaring energy costs wreck economies and force major dislocations, a fate perhaps to be shared by a level of government debt and spending combined with a loss of any national purpose that will together initiate an irreversible decline in the United States.

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