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EUROPE AT CROSSROAD: from a Champion of Cosmopolitanism to Mega-nationalism

Europa na rozdrożu: od orędownika kosmopolityzmu do mega-nacjonalizmu

Recent Roma expulsions from France, Mrs Merkel's, as well as Mr Cameron's disappointment in multiculturalism, Swiss referendum on minarets, etc, raise one of ominous questions of the political and cultural future of Europe. Indicatively, this has been happening in the countries of Condorcet and Voltaire, Kant and Hegel, Lock and Swift, therefore the part of the world where the idea of cosmopolitanism had been born and the voice in favour of religious tolerance had been raised. Even Mr Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, has recently had to warn of Islamophobic prejudices. The emerging anti-Americanism is the phenomenon contributing to the puzzle of actual and possibly even more xenophobic developments in Europe. Does this mean that Europe starts building the wall towards the rest of the world? Are we facing the appearance of euro-nationalism? The author is eagerly searching for a response to these questions. The paper undertakes to find out the fundamental causes. Quite hypothetically, it raises the question whether democracy itself, as defining feature of political culture in Europe, is appropriate to multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity, cultural diversity etc, as the prerequisites of any cosmopolitan role of Europe in the forthcoming future. It is namely people of Europe, not only leaders, who share such prejudices. The author maintains that Europe's troubles with itself, and the rest, rests on the inappropriate comprehension of freedom as the basic assumption to democracy. He reminds of Hegel's concept of freedom and challenges and risks of wrong applying of freedom. He also tests freedom as the fundamental value in comparison with Aristotle's concept of virtue. Freedom is fundamental to both Europe and democracy but it has its limits as well. Following Hegel, the author is trying to detect these limits. Eventually, the author's interest in theoretical approach to the issue has its practical purpose aiming to find out whether Anders Behring Breivik's shooting at multiculturalism in Oslo, as well as the recent Mevlid Jasarevic's shots at American Embassy in Sarajevo have its sources in Europe's wrong understanding and applying of freedom.

Key words: cosmopolitanism, democracy, Aristotle, Hegel, mega-nationalism, multiculturalism, freedom, value, virtue

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