

Newsbytes

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

The English-Speaking, German-Loving, French Politician Europe Has Been Waiting For

Emmanuel Macron is promising hope and change — for the entire continent.

BY ROBERT ZARETSKY JANUARY 17, 2017

In some of his many previous lives, 39-year-old Emmanuel Macron has been a philosophy student, an investment banker, and a minister of economy. It is not surprising, then, in his current life as an independent candidate for the French presidency, he does not always speak like other candidates. And it's not only the substance of his language that stands out but also, sometimes, his choice of language. Last week, in a speech at Berlin's Humboldt University, Macron spoke in impeccable English on the imperative of giving Europe a chance.

And of giving the future a chance: Macron's speech offered a powerful and convincing case that he is the last great French hope for a European future based on a common market and a common morality, a single currency and a singular commitment to the continent's core values.

Though his immediate audience was Humboldt's faculty and students, Macron was in fact addressing a far wider audience. He was seeking to mobilize French as well as German youths, and — in a reference to the program that allows EU citizens to study in other member states — the non-Erasmus as well as the Erasmus generations. Based on the audience's response to his speech, and his surging poll numbers in France, Macron — despite not having the support of an established party, or perhaps because he doesn't — is no longer the dark horse but instead the white knight for a growing number of French voters. However, what this particular knight promises, beyond verve and vitality, is not yet clear.

Predictably, the National Front lambasted Macron's choosing to speak English in Berlin. From the extreme far-right party, the tweets came fast and furious. Marine Le Pen, the party's presidential candidate, announced: “The presidential candidate Macron is going to Berlin to speak at a conference in English.” With a distinctly Trumpian flourish, she lamented: “Pauvre France!” (“Poor France!”) Her second-in-command, Florian Philippot, was equally displeased: “It's not only that he [Macron] disrespects our language, but he also doesn't believe in France.”

Language matters, of course, in France — especially when the language is not French but English. Fears that the language of Molière and Pierre Corneille — and thus the place of France — would be swept away by English have long stalked the French. Moreover, Le Pen's ire might have been compounded by her

ignorance of English, even though this trait has long been, if not a qualification, then at least not an obstacle to the Élysée. (Most presidents of the Fifth Republic have had an adversarial relationship with English. Indeed, one thing the Socialist François Hollande and Gaullist Nicolas Sarkozy had in common was a Clouseauian grasp of the language.)

At the start of his talk, Macron joked — in French — that since he has always believed the point of speech was to be understood, it made no sense to speak French at a European conference where English was the common tongue. He then segued seamlessly not only into English but into a worldview that would have been thoroughly familiar to the father of the European Union, fellow Frenchman Jean Monnet (whose English was fluent enough to coin the phrase attributed to Franklin D. Roosevelt describing the United States as the “arsenal of democracy”). But this same view is now retreating under the pressure of nationalist parties across Europe, united in their distaste for both the United States of America and the United States of Europe.

Given the ascendancy in the polls of Le Pen and the candidate of the center-right Les Républicains, François Fillon, Macron’s approach might seem tantamount to political suicide. Given the ascendancy in the polls of Le Pen and the candidate of the center-right Les Républicains, François Fillon, Macron’s approach might seem tantamount to political suicide. Both Le Pen and Fillon have run not just against immigration and refugees but also against Brussels and Monnet’s idea of Europe. Le Pen has, without respite, railed against immigrants in France, declaring, “Immigration is not an opportunity but instead a burden. We have neither the means, desire, nor energy to treat the unfortunate of the world with more generosity.”

Despite his Catholic faith, Fillon is equally unforgiving of those unfortunate enough to be born in failed states. When Fillon unveiled his immigration platform on Jan. 11, the newspaper *Libération* described it as a “bombshell.” Instead of focusing on Fillon’s plans to reduce or eliminate state aid to immigrants, the paper instead underscored his intention of introducing immigration quotas from non-EU states. Not only would this mark a rupture in French immigration policy since 1945, but it also marked a divorce with the French republican tradition that refuses to distinguish among races and religions. As the historian and legal scholar Patrick Weil warned when Sarkozy made a similar proposal in 2008, “If we adopt this law, France — the home of the rights of man — will be shunned by civilized nations.”

As for Europe, Fillon is still remembered for having voted against the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and although he now describes himself as European, he insists that France “remain sovereign in a Europe that respects nations.” Of course, if the EU didn’t exist, Le Pen would have had to create it, so useful has it been as a scapegoat in her political rise. (The EU does try to defend its own honor: While Le Pen has been demanding France’s withdrawal from the union, the EU has been demanding more than 300,000 euros it claims she took from Brussels’s bank account to pay her National Front staff.)

Finally, both Fillon and Le Pen have repeatedly played the national identity card. This month, Fillon caused a stir by presenting as presidential credentials that he is “Gaullist and Christian.” Rarely frequenting the church, Le Pen instead anchors her faith in the scripture of classic extreme right-wing (and anti-Semitic) thinkers like Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras. What unites these otherwise disparate discourses is that they leave precious little room for France’s 5 million Muslims.

Macron’s erstwhile colleagues in the Socialist Party have done little to set themselves apart from these claims. In particular, their leading candidate, former Prime Minister Manuel Valls, has hammered away at a straight and narrow interpretation of republicanism. He called for the outlawing of the so-called “burkini,” an Islam-inspired full-body swimsuit, warning French Muslims to be more “discreet” in advertising their religious convictions. Valls has been equally unbending on the politics of immigration. During a visit to Germany last year, he slammed Chancellor Angela Merkel’s open-door policy on refugees. Echoing his ostensible foe in Le Pen, he declared: “Europe cannot welcome any more refugees.”

Given the widespread appeal of anti-immigration and anti-European politics, Macron's position becomes all the more striking. It reflects not only his political and moral convictions but a strategic conviction as well: The French and the Germans, he believes, can still be rallied to the European project. He first expressed this position when, in early January, he published an editorial in *Le Monde*. Addressing the terrorist attack on a Christmas market in Berlin, he announced: "We are all Berliners, we are all Europeans." In crisp and compelling language, Macron argued for more and not less Europe. The answer was not to "expel refugees from the national community and build barricades between one another" — the solution for which nationalists on both sides of the Rhine clamored — but was instead to galvanize cooperation and compassion among Europeans. Whereas Le Pen and Valls see the refugees as a burden, Macron insisted they represented an "economic opportunity" for France and Europe.

Significantly, Macron repeatedly praised Merkel for maintaining, even in the face of terrorism, "our common values and preserving our common dignity by welcoming and lodging refugees in distress." But Macron had not only come to praise Merkel on her refugee policy but to provoke her on her monetary policy. Describing the euro as little more than a "weak Deutsche mark," he urged Germany to adopt a pro-growth and pro-investment strategy, all the while cutting slack to the EU's struggling members. Should Berlin fail to do so, Macron warned, the euro "would be dismantled in 10 years' time." In a clever riff on the concept of sovereignty — which now has totemic significance for Europe's nationalist right — Macron went on to argue that the euro will be saved only if Europe, and not its constituent members, acts like a truly sovereign body.

Not only has he challenged the Gaullist concept of national sovereignty, but Macron is also challenging the Gaullist concept of the state. Rather than maintaining the dirigiste model bequeathed by the concept's namesake, Macron is an unapologetic liberal. Not surprisingly, the policies he enacted as economy minister remain radioactive among many on the left. The so-called "loi Macron" of 2015 bundled together a number of modest labor reforms, in particular allowing stores to remain open on Sundays, that sparked waves of union demonstrations and a schism within the Socialist Party. But Macron not only had the support of one important union, the CFDT, but also powerful old-guard Socialists like Gérard Collomb, the mayor of Lyon. Several other powerful figures on the left have since gravitated toward his candidacy, including the influential architect and intellectual Roland Castro and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the former revolutionary of 1968 and current Green Party representative in the European Parliament. (Cohn-Bendit was, in fact, slouching prominently in the front row during Macron's speech at Humboldt, right next to former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer.)

Most telling, though, was the enthusiastic legion of students sitting in the auditorium's mezzanine. Macron made a point of directly addressing them during his talk, just as the students made a point of repeatedly cheering both his economic and political stances. What we might call *Macronomie 201* has a swelling enrollment in France as well. In contrast to the staid and sparse crowds at the rallies of his opponents, Macron's campaign events consistently draw thousands of loud and enthusiastic supporters. Last week, fewer than 300 people attended a speech by Valls in Clermont-Ferrand — the same city where, a week earlier, Macron drew a standing-room-only crowd of 2,000, with another 500 turned away at the doors. Reflecting Macron's burgeoning popularity, polls now credit him with 20 percent of the vote, placing him in third place behind Le Pen and Fillon. In a startling poll published last week by French pollster Ifop, Macron would defeat not only Le Pen with 65 percent of the vote, but also Fillon by 52 percent, in the second round of the election.

The obstacles faced by Macron, running without the support of a political party, remain imposing. But as the unflappable and understated political commentator Eric Dupin recently wrote, "something is happening" with Macron's candidacy. There is, he wrote, a kind of "political crystallization" taking place around his candidacy, spurred by Macron's promise to confront ideological shibboleths of the French left no less than the right. In a much-discussed column he wrote for the French edition of the *Huffington Post*, the crusty

leftist Castro gave voice to this crystallization. Following their meeting last November in Paris, when Macron declared his candidacy to more than 10,000 supporters, Castro left deeply impressed. He was certain, he wrote, that Macron was not going to “occupy a centrist position but a central position. This is the proper place for a president of the Republic, one who is not the incarnation of a party but the president of all the French.”

As elections and referendums in 2016 remind us, stranger things have happened. But unlike the experiences in Great Britain and the United States, the stranger thing in France would be an immeasurably more hopeful thing, perhaps for all of Europe.

Stop Operation Soros (SOS): Massive Movement To Overthrow George Soros Explodes In Macedonia

By Pamela Geller - on January 22, 2017
GEORGE SOROS: THE BLACK HAND

A major new initiative called Stop Operation Soros (SOS), a movement dedicated to stopping the evil machinations of Nazi collaborator billionaire George Soros, has taken off in Macedonia.

The SOS founders called on citizens around the world to “fight against one-mindedness in the civil sector, which is devised and led by George Soros.” The movement has been set up to expose the ‘subversive activities of all of George Soros’s organizations. Hungary has also taken to steps to clamp down on Soros funded organizations by banning them from the country.

‘STOP OPERATION SOROS’ MOVEMENT BEGINS IN MACEDONIA

A new initiative, Stop Operation Soros (SOS), dedicated to countering the influence of American billionaire activist George Soros, has been launched in Macedonia.

In a press conference on Tuesday, the founders of the group called on all “free-minded citizens,” regardless of ethnicity or religion, to join them in the “fight against one-mindedness in the civil sector, which is devised and led by George Soros,” the Vecer newspaper reported. The movement says it will first focus on uncovering ‘subversive’ activities by Soros-funded NGOs.

According to Nikola Srbov, a columnist for pro-government news portal Kurir and co-founder of SOS, Soros-funded NGOs have monopolized civil society in Macedonia and used their position to suppress dissenting views.

“We’ve witnessed the takeover of the entire civil sector and its abuse and instrumentalization to meet the goals of one political party. That is unacceptable and goes beyond the principles of civic organizing,” Srbov said at the press conference.

“The Open Society Foundation, operating under the Soros umbrella, used its funding and personnel to support violent processes in Macedonia. It has monopolized the civil society sector, pushing outside any organization which disagrees with the Soros ideology,” he stated.

Another co-founder, Cvetin Cilimanov, editor-in-chief of the state-run MIA news agency, accused Soros’s Open Society Foundations of undermining Macedonian sovereignty by working not only with the opposition center-left SDSM party, but also with outside interests. By cooperating with foreign embassies and organizations such as USAID, Cilimanov believes Soros-backed groups have interfered in the political

process of Macedonia.

“This is unacceptable and has largely contributed to a feeling in the public that the traditional relations of partnership Macedonia enjoyed with some countries are being undermined,” Cilimanov told journalists.

A third founder of the initiative and editor-in-chief of the Republika news portal, Nenad Mircevski, declared that the group would work towards the “de-Soros-ization” of Macedonia, echoing a speech made by former prime minister and leader of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE party Nikola Gruevski in December. In the speech, Gruevski accused foreign powers and Soros-backed organizations of meddling in Macedonian politics.

Opposition figures have expressed concern at the rhetoric used by Gruevski, fearing the start of a crackdown on dissent and advocacy groups.

The Open Society Foundation (OSF) was set up by Hungarian-born Soros between the mid-1980s to early 1990s with the stated aim of helping former Eastern bloc countries transition from communism. However, aside from its support for progressive causes such as drug policy reform, the OSF has also been involved in political activities and Soros publically supported the violent overthrow of the legitimately-elected government in Ukraine during the ‘Euromaidan’ revolution. This has earned him the ire of Russian authorities, which in 2015 banned Soros and his foundations as a threat to national security.

Soros and his foundations have come under scrutiny elsewhere as well. In an interview with the internet portal 888.hu in December, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said that 2017 would bring about “the extrusion of George Soros and the forces symbolized by him.” Orban has accused Soros of undermining European borders and values by helping facilitate the flow of refugees and asylum seekers from the Middle East and elsewhere. During a Reddit AMA (Ask Me Anything), WikiLeaks’ Julian Assange also blasted the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, funded by Soros, for focusing “exclusively on negative stories about Russia and former Soviet states.”

(Now if we could only be so brave as to pitch him in America.....MD)

The Nations Gathered Against Israel

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The world’s hatred against the Jews has been as predictable as the tidal waves. Just as soon as the world gets over one bout of anti-Semitism, another wave comes rolling in.

For decades the horrors of the Holocaust made the foes of Israel very cautious. The passage of time has caused many to forget mistakes of the past. The enemies of the Jewish state have also been emboldened by a new angle of attack. The haters are now saying, “We’re not anti-Israel, we’re pro-Palestinian.”

This mentality has brought us right back to the twisted thinking of Nazi Germany. Last week a German appellate court upheld the decision of a lower court—that three Palestinians who tried to burn a synagogue were not engaged in anti-Semitism; they were merely exercising their basic civil rights to protest against the Israeli government. Charges against the three were dismissed.

How can we possibly live in a civil society if Muslim terrorists are allowed to freely attack Jews? If Jews used force to confront those three hoodlums, I doubt the court would say they were exercising their basic right to defend their property. No, that would be anti-Arab racism.

All around the world, it's open season for anything connected to the Jewish race. Here in America, 27 Jewish community centers in seventeen states reported receiving (false) telephone bomb threats on the 18th of this month. It was the second wave of hoax attacks to target American Jewish facilities in less than two weeks.

The most troubling thing about these anti-Semitic attacks is the lack of concern. If someone paints a swastika on a synagogue, the crime is a one-day story. If someone says Muslims should not come to a nation, it is considered a hate crime.

Our former president, Barack Hussein Obama, was the most anti-Israel president in history. He failed to block two votes at the United Nations that denied the Jews biblical and historical ties to the land of their ancestors.

His administration backed the lie that the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, as well as much of the city itself and the lands known as Judea and Samaria are illegally inhabited by Jews. To side with Obama, you have to ignore the fact that there never was a Palestinian people and the fossil records that confirm the Jewishness of Israel going back some 4000 years.

I knew Obama would make one parting shot at Israel. At his last press conference he said, "I don't see how this issue gets resolved in a way that maintains Israel as both Jewish and a democracy." Of course, he was implying that Israel is an illegitimate nation that is only held together by force.

Pope Francis has also gotten his hands dirty by siding with the enemies of Israel. On January 14, the Pope received the Palestinian Authority, President Mahmoud Abbas. It's bad enough that the Vatican is giving diplomatic recognition of a non-existent Palestinian state, but it also gives legitimacy to a man who decided he doesn't need to bother with elections to hold office.

I received a flood of emails about the January 15, 2017 diplomatic conference in Paris where 72 nations gathered to talk about how to make a Palestinian state a reality. Never mind that there are much bigger problems in the world like the division Cyprus, Russia's control of the Crimea, China's claim to international waters, and the mess of northern Syria. There are no campus demonstrations chanting, "Free Gaza from the tyranny of Hamas."

The Paris meeting turned out to be a pointless yak fest. Our new president, then still president-elect Donald Trump, saved the day by letting it be known that he did not take kindly to a major diplomatic move five days before he was to take office. British Prime Minister Theresa May also helped seal the meetings irrelevancy by only sending a non-participating envoy and saying it is now time to build a relationship with the new American administration.

A clear indication that we are getting closer to the end of the last days has been the demonic driven escalation on the hatred of Israel. The rhetoric attacking Israel has gone from initially being called an "occupier" to an "apartheid state. And to where she is now be called an "aggressor." Donald Trump may slow the momentum of this train of hate, but I don't think he will be able to derail it.

"On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations" (Zechariah 12:3).

—Todd Strandberg