



The New Vichy Syndrome: Why European Intellectuals Surrender to Barbarism

Theodore Dalrymple

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Western Europe is in a strangely neurotic condition of being smug and terrified at the same time. On the one hand, Europeans believe they have at last created an ideal social and political system in which man can live comfortably. In many ways, things have never been better on the old continent. On the other hand, there is growing anxiety that Europe is quickly falling behind in an aggressive, globalized world. Europe is at the forefront of nothing, its demographics are rapidly transforming in unsettling ways, and the ancient threat of barbarian invasion has resurfaced in a fresh manifestation.

In *The New Vichy Syndrome*, Theodore Dalrymple traces this malaise back to the great conflicts of the last century and their devastating effects upon the European psyche. From issues of religion, class, colonialism, and nationalism, Europeans hold a “miserablist” view of their history, one that alternates between indifference and outright contempt of the past. Today’s Europeans no longer believe in anything but personal economic security, an increased standard of living, shorter working hours, and long vacations in exotic locales.

The result, Dalrymple asserts, is an unwillingness to preserve European achievements and the dismantling of western culture by Europeans themselves. As vapid hedonism and aggressive Islamism fill this cultural void, Europeans have no one else to blame for their plight.

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