

*Lessons From The Election*

By Stephen Bowen

## **Is the EU really a model for the U.S.?**

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My senior year in college I signed up for a comparative political systems class on the Soviet Union. My timing was impeccable. As the class began in fall of 1990, the splintering of the Soviet state was already well under way. A year later, the USSR would no longer exist.

I walked into the class on the first day excited at the prospect of analyzing this history in the making. What had gone wrong for the Soviets and what was to come of the geopolitical balance with the end of this regime, something we in America had sought for decades?

Imagine my disappointment, then, when the professor, who had dedicated his academic career to understanding a government system that would shortly become history, decided to simply move forward with his curriculum as though it was still 1974. We thus spent the rest of the semester deep in study of the Politburo, the Secretariat of the Communist Party Central Committee and various other institutions of a government that was packing to leave for the history books as we sat in class.

I felt bad for the professor. Everything he had studied for years was ending, and he wasn't quite ready to let it go. He retired not long after.

I was reminded of all this while reading coverage of professor David Calleo's keynote address at the [Camden Conference](#), in which he reportedly held up the European Union as some kind "post-unipolar" model for the organization of nation states, celebrating as well its role as a "friendly" bulwark to balance American imperialism.

Maybe not so much.

According to columnist Mark Steyn's new book, "America Alone," "The U.S. government's National Intelligence Council is predicting the EU will collapse by 2020." Why? Because the Europe we think of, the Europe of Beethoven and Shakespeare, the Europe that gave us our concepts of property rights and the rule of law, is in a slow but steady death spiral.

In short, says Steyn, Europeans are not having enough babies to maintain steady population growth and their aging populations will cripple their overly generous cradle-to-grave welfare programs, which will bring down their economies. Worse still, waiting in the wings is a growing Muslim population that will make traditional European cultures minorities in their own counties by mid-century.

Hard to believe? It would be if it were not for simple mathematics.

According to Steyn, 2.1 children per woman is what is considered by demographers to be the "replacement rate," the rate at which a society maintains its current population. Greece's

comparable fertility rate is 1.3, Italy's is 1.2 and Spain's is 1.1. At these rates, these three nations are effectively halving the size of each succeeding generation, ensuring that there will one day be only a quarter as many grandchildren as there are grandparents.

This is happening all across Europe, with the only nations even approaching "replacement rate" being those with growing Muslim populations, who are having the babies that Europeans seem to have lost interest in having themselves.

In Steyn's words, "In the 14th century, the Black Death wiped out a third of the Continent's population, in the 21st century a larger proportion will disappear – in effect, by choice." We are living, he says, through "the self-extinction of the civilization which, for good or ill, shaped the age we live in."

European civilization's fecundity problem is compounded by the enormous costs of the Continent's vast welfare state, so often held up by American leftists to be the ideal model of caring, compassionate government. Having a working-age demographic cohort attempting to support pension and health benefits for a retired demographic many times its size will wreak havoc on the economies of Europe, already staggering along with double-digit unemployment.

Young Europeans, faced with living in a culture dominated by those much older, who are both contemptuous those younger and demanding of their financial support, will look for their futures elsewhere, speeding the demographic decline of their native states.

Then, of course, there is the Muslim issue. Steyn quotes a Norwegian Imam, who notes with some satisfaction that the math is working in their favor. "Every Western women in the EU is producing an average of 1.4 children, every Muslim woman in the same countries is producing 3.5 children."

You do the math. How long before the Muslims become majorities across Europe? How long before they control permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council?

Would it be a problem if they did? You tell me. Of the 46 Muslim-majority nations in the world, only three are considered free as measured by indexes of personal freedom and democratic rule. Across the broad swath of Islamic nations from North Africa to Indonesia, there is hardly a single freely published newspaper and very little protection for the basic human and civil rights to which the West has become accustomed.

Could this be Europe in 50 years? What would it mean for the U.S.?

Those who were not able to make it the [Camden Conference](#) would be well served to read Mark Steyn's "America Alone," to find out. It is one of the most thought-provoking books I've read in years.

*Stephen Bowen is a teacher from Rockport and a former state legislator representing Camden and Rockport.*