**Europe's Culture War: Secularism on the March**

From the desk of [Paul Belien](http://www.brusselsjournal.com/paulbelien) on Wed, 2007-05-23 07:41

Europe is in the middle of a three-way culture war, between the defenders of traditional Judeo-Christian morality, the proponents of secular hedonism and the forces of Islamic Jihadism. In Western Europe, the fight between Christians and secularists is all but over. The secularists have won. Now, the religious vacuum left by the demise of Christianity is being filled by the Muslims. Since one cannot fight something with nothing, the European secularists are no match for Islam.

Meanwhile, the dark forces of secularism, such as the European Union (EU), are waging war in Central and Eastern Europe, where they target countries such as Poland, Slovakia and the Baltic states.

On April 25, the European Parliament (EP), the EU's legislature, adopted a resolution condemning "homophobia." With 325 votes against 124 and 150 abstentions, the EP warned Poland that it will face sanctions if it adopts a law barring the promotion of homosexuality in schools. Churches, too, were reprimanded for "fermenting hatred and violence [against homosexuals]." Poland's prime minister, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, commented on the resolution: "Nobody is limiting gay rights in Poland. However, if we're talking about not having homosexual propaganda in Polish schools... such propaganda should not be in schools." Cardinal Angelo Scola of Venice retorted: "There is no homophobia in the Catholic Church and it is time that all this [recrimination of Christians in the European Parliament] ended."

It is not likely to end. The fight against "intolerance" -- i.e. adherence to traditional Christian morality -- is intensifying. On May 3, the European Court of Human Rights found Polish President Lech Kaczynski guilty of violating human rights because he banned a "gay pride" parade in Warsaw in 2005. Last March, the same court ordered Poland to compensate a woman who was denied an abortion. Last year, Poland was denounced by the Council of Europe because it prohibited the distribution in schools of a leaflet about homosexuality.

When Poland joined the EU in May 2004, it did so on condition that "no EU treaties or annexes to those treaties would hamper the Polish government in regulating moral issues or those concerning the protection of human life." However, in January 2006 the European Parliament called for "tough action" against Poland and the Baltic states, while Franco Frattini, the EU justice commissioner, warned that the EU has powers under Article 13 of the EU Treaty to combat homophobia. The move came after Latvia included an amendment in its constitution that restricts marriage to a man and a woman, and Estonia proposed similar legislation. Some members of the European Parliament have called for punishing Poland and the Baltic states by suspending their voting rights in EU councils.

In February 2006, the EU brought down the government of Slovakia, another Christian country in Central Europe, after EU legal experts rejected a Slovak proposal which guaranteed that doctors and nurses in Slovakia would not be obliged to "perform artificial abortions, artificial or assisted fertilizations, experiments with or handling of human organs, human embryos or human sex cells, euthanasia, cloning, sterilizations, [and] acts connected with contraception."

The EU experts ruled that doctors should sometimes be forced to perform abortions, even if they have conscientious objections, because the right to abort a child is an "international human right," while the right to conscientious objection is not "unlimited." The experts stated that assisted suicide and same-sex marriage are also among the basic human rights.

Indeed, in Western Europe Christians no longer enjoy the right of conscientious objection. In 2001, Nynke Eringa, a civil servant in the Dutch town of Leeuwarden, was fired because she refused to perform same-sex marriages, recently legalized in the Netherlands. In 2004, her dismissal was annulled because the town had made procedural errors when she was sacked.

The authorities have since decided that conscientious objection can only be claimed by civil servants who were already in office before 2001, while those employed after the legalization of same-sex marriages cannot refuse to marry homosexuals. This means that access to jobs in the civil service, which involve performing registry office marriages, is effectively denied to Christians. Similarly, in some Western European countries today Christians are effectively excluded from medical professions by a requirement that they participate in abortions during their studies.

Even freedom of speech has been restricted. Last year, a French court convicted Christian Vanneste, a member of the French Parliament for the governing UMP party, because he had said that "heterosexuality is morally superior to homosexuality." Mr. Vanneste was sentenced to a fine of $4,000, plus $4,000 in "damages" to the homosexual activists who had taken him to court, on the basis of the 2004 French law criminalizing "homophobia."

In 1954, Karl Popper warned that the "moral framework" is the most important safeguard of a society because it "serves as a basis which makes it possible to reach a fair or equitable compromise between conflicting interests where this is necessary. It is, of course, itself not unchangeable, but it changes comparatively slowly. Nothing is more dangerous than the destruction of this traditional framework, as it was consciously aimed at by Nazism. In the end its destruction will lead to cynicism and nihilism, i.e. to the disregard and the dissolution of all human values."

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