

Appeasement

(July 2024)

On July 5th, Her Excellency, Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen, née Albrecht, 13th President of the European Commission (unelected), commented on the Hungarian Prime Minister's visit to Moscow:

Hungarian @PM_ViktorOrban is visiting Moscow:

Appeasement will not stop Putin.

Only unity and determination will pave the path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

However, Ms. von der Leyen did not elaborate on the reasons according to which she believes appeasement would not stop Mr. Putin, nor did she tell from what exactly Mr. Putin would be stopped, nor did she expound the nature of a just peace in the Ukraine.

Russia's goals have been clearly stated by various members of her government, though, and consist primarily in keeping the Ukraine neutral so that U.S. nuclear missiles won't be installed on the Russian border a mere 450 km from the Kremlin, ensuring that the armies of the Ukraine refrain from continuing the decade long shelling of the eastern Russian-speaking civilian populations, and allowing their people to speak their own language.

In that respect it is quite improbable that Mr. Putin would stop in his endeavors, nor that he should.

As for Ms. von der Leyen's idea of Justice of the Peace, it seems to relate to the government of the Ukraine installing nuclear missiles a mere 450 km from the Kremlin, continuing to shell civilian populations in the eastern regions, banning thereat any language other than the Slavic dialect spoken by government representatives, and expelling the Russian Navy from the port of Sevastopol, once the latter was made a possession of Ms. von der Leyen's.

In that respect it is quite improbable that Mr. Putin would agree to this flavour of Justice, nor that he should.

Now, regarding the long-lived cliché of appeasement, it seems to be still used by certain politicians whenever convenient, to justify their bellicose ardor.

Students of the genesis of World War II will remember that quite extraordinary assertion that it was too much appeasement that led Mr. Hitler to invade his neighbours.

One could rather reason on the contrary that a ferocious Mr. Hitler had not been properly nor sufficiently appeased, otherwise he would have been content with peace, by definition of the words. It would appear that British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had failed in his

1939 appeasement policy toward Germany. Let it be said that perhaps he did not try hard enough, nor was he supported by enough of his colleagues, who seemed to almost pray for war.

Claiming that the idea of appeasement was wrong because he failed is tantamount to a student declaring that math is wrong because he failed the examination. Math is not wrong, and neither is appeasement. It is not the matter that failed, but the student.

What was obviously needed at the onset of World War II was more and better appeasement techniques, not less.

Speaking of which, it would be interesting to reflect on the reasons that led to The Resistible Rise of Adolfo Hitler, to paraphrase Bertolt Brecht.

Whereas the German armies were entrenched deep inside France in the summer of 1918 (and not the other way around), the German government wisely sought ways to an armistice as early as September 1918, a few weeks after the arrival of 2 million U.S. soldiers in France, each passing day seeing 10,000 more landing.

It can be safely asserted that it was the late entry into war of the United States that led to the armistice of 11 November 1918, not some invincibility of the French and British Forces.

However, after the signing of the armistice, France treated Germany as if she had capitulated, and insisted mercilessly during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and 1920 that Germany and her allies be severely punished as the sole instigators of the war, which they were clearly not.

Hence the disbandment of the German armies, the humiliation of defeat, the free for all distribution of German populated German land to Poland and others, and the terribly onerous war reparations, which Georges Clémenceau obtained despite President Wilson's (and the economist John Maynard Keynes') opposition, and led first to an economic disaster in Germany and then to the Great Depression in the U.S.

The consequence in Germany was a deep resentment and hatred of the Allies in general and the French in particular, on which Adolf Hitler built his ascent to power.

However, the otherwise politically astute Mr. Hitler, who was riding the wave of discontent and resentment, committed his greatest, gravest, bizarre and silliest lapse of judgement by going after the Jew as the scapegoat, whereas the natural scapegoat already existed in the guise of the French.

Had Mr. Hitler not chosen foolishly to switch scapegoats, the German Jews would have shown the same Teutonic patriotism they had displayed in 1914, they would not have fled to America with the blueprints of the atom bomb (so to speak), and they would have loudly applauded Herr Hitler's efforts to protect ethnic Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Here, a pause to reflect on the fact that Germany was naturally not a particularly anti-Semitic place at the time, and on the contrary had been historically the most welcoming

country of Europe, as exemplified by the sheer numbers of German Jews and the Yiddish language, which is a dialect of German written in the Hebrew script. The worst anti-Semitism was at the time found in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, and Bessarabia, which saw the most pogroms at the hands of local populations, although Saint Petersburg was later made to bear sole responsibility as the sovereign power, nothing being said by then of the actual local perpetrators (see [The Pale](#)).

In that respect, the German Jews, who were well aware of the anti-Semitic exactions in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, would have strongly supported the German inroads into Poland, which however resulted, for some hard to comprehend reasons, in the French and British declarations of war against Germany, and from there the logical consequence of the German invasions of Denmark and Norway first and later part of Western Europe and France.

In short, had Clémenceau not exacted untoward and undeserved revenge on Germany, had Hitler not chosen foolishly to turn the Jews into scapegoats (although the issue was never in any way an instigator of the war), had the British and the French shown a better proficiency in methods of appeasement, and had they chosen later more diplomatic methods upon the invasion of Poland, instead of declaring war, there would have been no World War II.

It can be said with certainty that the Second World War was the clear wrecking product of the exceedingly incompetent steering of at least three European Ships of Fools.

Now, you may be curious to learn more about how to deal with a modern statesman you deem ferociously dangerous.

We may be tempted to consider a current example, in the form of reputedly fierce and nuclear armed North Korean Kim Jong Un.

One way to address the issue is to band together against him with "*unity and determination*", à la Clémenceau, and deprive him of any means of survival, until he feels so trapped in his tiny corner that he will eventually react in a suicidal fashion and destroy himself and his neighbours, some very far off across the oceans.

That's the Western Way.

The other is to avoid petting the tiger's fur against the grain, and offer Mr. Kim a nice brand new luxury automobile, while helping him out of starvation, thus trying to appease him.

That's the Eastern Way.

Either the Holier than Thou Crusader ¹, or the Pragmatist.

¹ Who believes he's the Best because he's not the Worst, which however would be true only if there were no more than two contenders.