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## BOOK REVIEW

**Kirchick, James, *The End of Europe: Dictators, Demagogues, and the Coming Dark Ages*, London: Yale University Press, 2017, 273 pages.**

The book begins with a socio-political analysis of Europe. After the end of Cold War, the American policy makers diverted their attention from a presumably stabilized Europe to Asia and the Far East, This displacement created fissures in the Euro-Atlantic relationship. There were several political and socio-economic, issues incubating in the post-Cold War Europe, which upon maturity surfaced in the form of financial troubles, refugee crisis, rebellious populism, and intra-continental hostility.

The first chapter provides a detailed analysis of Russia and its hostile advances in Eastern Europe. The author specifically highlights the Russian attack on Crimea and Moscow's contentions with Estonia. Russia aims to deter NATO and create rifts within the alliance. To achieve these targets, it has deployed soft power and institutional manipulation. The author emphasizes that this has mainly been a reaction to West's encroachment into the erstwhile Soviet backyard (Eastern Europe) and its insistence that Moscow must adopt a certain set of values if it desires membership of this Western democratic club.

In chapter two, the author discusses the political scenario in Hungary. He asserts that Hungary was an active participant in the Jewish Holocaust during the Second World War, and that it thoroughly assisted Nazis to execute Jews living within its territory. However, nowadays, the Hungarian government is busy trying to alter the history. It is portraying itself as the victim of Nazism and German imperialism just like other European countries.

The third chapter outlines the geo-strategic significance of Germany and its diplomatic orientations. There is a very strong undercurrent within the country that seeks a kind of strategic autonomy at the expense of continued Western alliance. It looks to the east and would like to see

dynamism in Russo-German relations. This feeling has further intensified in 2013 when Edward Snowden's intelligence leaks revealed that the US' spying apparatus had been eavesdropping on German political figures as high as German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In the same space, the author attempts to justify this practise by reminding the readers of the infamous episode of Gunter Guillaume. He was one of Willy Brandt's closest aides who was later uncovered as a secret agent of East German intelligence. That there had always been lacunas in West German counter-intelligence only warranted an appropriate response to neutralize hostile intrusions. A section of the German political establishment tilts heavily towards Moscow. The writer points out that former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has cultivated deep personal ties with the Russian political hierarchy and that he has remained an ardent supporter of President Putin. In a nutshell, Germany aspires a path independent of burdensome alliances.

The next chapter titled, "The European Union: Trouble in Paradise" discusses the refugee and migration crises. The author maintains that both of these crises have been the outcome of Europe's lenient policy towards migrants and refugees over the decades. Several European countries like Denmark, Germany and Sweden considered discussion on these issues as a socio-political taboo. Consequently, Europe has been witnessing the rise of populist parties across the continent. The author warns that the influx of these refugees and migrants may disturb the European social fabric. Lack of assimilation and integration give rise to ghettoisation and crime.

The fifth chapter, "France without Jews", takes the French political establishment to task that it has not done enough to curb anti-Semitism within the country. The French government failed to take meaningful steps to protect the life and property of French Jews especially after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. The author explains that, generally, in Europe, the Jewish Community is considered an extension of the Israeli government. Therefore, any reported human rights violations committed by Israel are condemned by attacking European Jewry morally and physically. The author asserts that throughout Europe, and particularly in France, anti-Jewish sentiments are prevalent in political parties as they are electorally beneficial.

The next chapter gives a detailed analysis of Britain's decision to exit the EU. It touches upon its political and economic implications. According to

the author, the prime cause of Brexit was the propaganda of British tabloids that Brussels was controlling London and that the country's sovereignty was on stake. It has been highlighted that, initially, the problem of migration was never a part of the "Leave Campaign". It was very easy for the British government to curb migration through temporary restrictions under the EU law. The author further speculates that Brexit has revived Scottish nationalism, weakened Western European alliance and left German dominance unchecked in Europe. As the process of divorce picks up pace, the foreign trade partners of the EU will relocate their offices from the UK to other EU locations. The UK is deepening its relationship with China to maintain its influence in global politics and economy.

Chapter seven discusses the political and economic situation in Greece. The author explains that the Greek political environment has always been populist in nature. The recently emerged political outfit Syriza overthrew the economic hegemony of PASOK and New Democracy but maintained its rivals' populist disposition. The Greek economic downturn has mainly been the result of reckless government spending. Moreover, instead of taking responsibility and working hard to alleviate this crisis, both the Greek government and public reprimanded the "Troika" for the adverse situation. The author suggests that the Greek must put their house in order to avoid any meltdown in the future.

The final chapter sheds light on the political crisis in Ukraine and role of Russian government in stoking up the conflict. The author compares the Ukrainian crisis with the political turmoil that engulfed Kyrgyzstan in 2010. He states that Moscow behaved differently at each occasion. President Bakiyev's attempt to manoeuvre between Russian and American interests landed him in Belarus in exile. Russia did not step in to rescue him. On the other hand, the Ukrainian government under Viktor Yanukovich remained excessively friendly towards Moscow. So when he was ousted as a result of a popular upheaval, Russia forcefully intervened to protect him. The author insists that the Russian-backed activity in eastern Ukraine may create security dilemmas in the continent.

The author has concluded the book with the view that the old and mature generation of European politicians is being replaced by new populist faces who abhors supranational interests. They shy away from a consensus required to check Russian aggression, German hegemony, Hungarian

illiberal democracy and French anti-Semitism. The author fears that European liberalism is doomed if the current circumstances do not alter. The book concludes with a recommendation that the Euro-Atlantic ties must be solidified to counter the aforementioned challenges.

**Dr. Zobi Fatima**