

# The End of Europe?

[By Frank Furedi](#)  
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*Edited by Andy Ross*

"The future of the West is not a limitless tending upwards and onwards for all time towards our presents ideals, but a single phenomenon of history, strictly limited and defined as to form and duration, which covers a few centuries and can be viewed and, in essentials, calculated from available precedents."  
Oswald Spengler

Oswald Spengler's 1926 book *Decline of the West* was a talking point in European salons. Spengler attributed what he considered to be the inexorable decline of the West to the rise of the uncultured masses. He had the most venomous contempt for the mass of the population.

In contemporary Europe, the pessimists tend to point the finger of blame at the mass influx of immigrants. This immigrant-blaming has become more intense following the events of 9/11. Today there is much public handwringing about a possible Islamization of Europe.

The preoccupation with an immigrant invasion of Europe shows how far Malthusianism is influencing our thinking. There has been a shift in the cultural imagination in recent years toward a new consciousness of natural limits. Many thinkers and commentators are concerned about the reluctance of European natives to have large families, or to have any children at all, and thus they would like to see a reduction in the numbers of the "wrong kind of people" in Europe.

German sociologist Gunnar Heinsohn believes that Western aid to overseas countries encourages too many young men in the Third World to survive, in a state of anger. Frustrated by their low status, where they live on handouts and charity, these young men become resentful about their place in the world and occasionally turn to violence in order to gain power and prestige.

Heinsohn is concerned with what he perceives to be a gigantic youth bulge in many Muslim countries, and its potentially destructive consequences. Heinsohn associates high fertility rates with what he refers to as a process of demographic rearmament.

Today, those who express concern about the violence that might spring from demographic rearmament are not only worried about the future of the Mideast and other parts of the Muslim world. Their main concern is that there will be a demographic capitulation in Europe. The low birth rate is seen as a precursor of European decline and decadence.

Throughout history, societies have successfully absorbed immigrants, to the benefit of all. Heinsohn thinks the young immigrants who currently inhabit the cities of Europe are unlikely to follow this pattern: "It is not because Africans or Muslims are not as intelligent as others, they are just not socialized in a way that makes them useful in our societies."

Demographic patterns reflect social and cultural shifts. Europe has not lost its physical ability to reproduce. Many Europeans seem simply to have lost interest in producing children.

In any case, the trend towards declining fertility rates in Europe is unlikely to be reversed in the long run. Pro-natal policies have little impact on European people's choices or behavior. Heinsohn says such policies will probably benefit immigrant couples more.

Heinsohn is right to worry about the social and cultural distance between some immigrant groups and

their host communities. But the fact that significant sections of new immigrant communities have little interest in integrating into European societies is not a result of any demographic law. If there is a problem in Europe today, then it has little to do with immigrant communities and much more to do with the failure of European societies to socialize and integrate these communities.

Europe's political and cultural elites are reluctant to engage with the problems that face society. More than any other group of people, these elites are responsible for today's cultural pessimism. For the first time in the modern era, the European political elites lack a clear project.

Today Europe appears to have very few values to share. The reluctance of some immigrant to integrate exposes this fact. Maybe we need more pessimists to wake us up.

## Oswald Spengler

[By Keith Stimely](#)  
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Oswald Spengler was born in central Germany in 1880. In 1901, he entered the University of Munich. His doctoral dissertation at Halle was on Heraclitus.

He taught in Saarbrücken, Düsseldorf, and finally Hamburg. He taught mathematics, physical sciences, history, and German literature. In 1911 he left the teaching profession.

He settled in Munich as an independent scholar. He began the writing of a book on contemporary politics. However in late 1911 he was struck by the notion that the events of the day could only be interpreted in global terms. He saw Europe as marching off to suicide, a first step toward the final demise of European culture in the world and in history.

The Great War of 1914-1918 only confirmed in his mind the validity of a thesis already developed. His planned work kept increasing in scope far, far beyond the original bounds. The first volume of *The Decline of the West* appeared in the summer of 1918. The book was an immediate and unprecedented success. In 1922 Spengler issued a revised edition of the first volume, and 1923 saw the appearance of the second volume.

Spengler deciphered history with the following basic postulates:

- The linear view of history must be rejected. This scheme can be replaced by the notion of history as moving in definite, observable, and unrelated cycles.
- The cyclical movements of history are of high cultures. Recorded history gives us eight such high cultures: the Indian, the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Chinese, the Mexican, the Arabian, the Classical (Greece and Rome), and the European-Western. Each high culture has a prime symbol. The prime symbol of the Classical culture was the fascination with the space of immediate and logical visibility. The prime symbol of Western culture is the Faustian soul, symbolizing the upward reaching for the infinite.
- High cultures are living things and must pass through the stages of birth-development-fulfillment-decay-death. The high-water mark of a high culture is the culture phase. The civilization phase that inevitably follows witnesses drastic social upheavals, wars and crises. The civilization phase concludes with the imperialistic stage. Each culture's lifespan can be seen to last about a thousand years.

So history is the record of the rise and fall of unrelated high cultures. These cultures are life-forms, and like all organisms pass through the phases of birth-life-death. It is possible from the vantage point of

the twentieth century to predict the decline and fall of the West.

After experiencing the Bavarian revolution and its short-lived Soviet republic, Spengler wrote a slender volume entitled *Prussianism and Socialism*. Its theme was that conservatives and socialists should unite under the banner of a true socialism. This was not the Marxist-materialist abomination, he said, but a socialism of the German community, based on its unique work ethic, discipline, and organic rank.

In 1931, Spengler published *Man and Technics*. The development of advanced technology is unique to the West, and he predicted where it would lead. The book warns the European or white races of the pressing danger from the colored races. It predicts a time when the colored peoples of the earth will use the technology of the West to destroy the West.

Spengler never joined the National Socialist party. His views about the National Socialists surfaced in late 1933, in his book *The Hour of Decision*. Predicting a second world war, he warned that forces outside the country that would mobilize to destroy the National Socialists. Spengler died in 1936.

**AR** Spengler is an interesting case, and his theory is interesting enough to be taken seriously, but it is flawed, for reasons I would need to write a book to explain.

## Oswald Spengler

[Robert W. Merry](#)  
[The National Interest, January 2013](#)

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**Der Untergang des Abendlandes** (Vol 1, 1918; Vol 2, 1922) by Oswald Spengler hit the German market like a boulder tossed upon an anthill. It sold a hundred thousand in eight years.

Spengler works by historical analogy. He rejects the notion that the West holds center stage in world history as the Ptolemaic system of history and posits his own Copernican discovery in the historical sphere, with no special position for the classical or Western civilizations relative to others.

He sees the great cultures as organisms whose phases of emergence, development, and decline are similar from culture to culture. Each civilization is born when a people develops a distinctive way of looking at the world. The new culture runs on for a thousand years or so unless interrupted by external forces. Then begins the civilizational phase, characterized by the deterioration of the culture.

Spengler distinguishes between culture and civilization. The former is the phase of creative energy. The latter is a time of materialism and imperialism. His civilizations: Western (Faustian), Greco-Roman (Apollonian), Indian, Babylonian, Chinese, Egyptian, Arabian (Magian), and Mexican (Aztec).

Spengler thought Germany would be the last nation of the West, spawning the Führer who would lead the West to its final civilizational glory of world dominance. But he rejected the Nazis.

America is the last nation of the West. America is destined to fulfill the vision of hegemonic zeal and a push toward dictatorship. Spengler's work stands as a great warning to Americans.

**AR** My book [CORAL](#) trumps Spengler's story.