

EU's future at stake in the battle of Budapest

By Max Ferrari

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Few people know the real nightmare of the EU has a name: The Visegrad Group (V4), a union of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia that, mindful of the Soviet occupation, is increasingly challenging the centralizing will of Brussels and what the members call the "Soviet Union of Europe."

Initially treated as a marginal subject of Central-Eastern Europe, the V4, with the arrival of the leaderships of Viktor Orban in Hungary and Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland, has become a huge problem for EU bureaucrats, given that the criticisms advanced from these rebels on key issues such as immigration, identity, moral issues and national sovereignty have attracted and given strength to the so-called "populist forces" of Western Europe. Stopping Orban, the Visegrad Group and all the euro rebels is therefore a priority for the EU, which sees a crucial date in the upcoming Hungarian elections on April 8.

If Orban wins, the V4 could soon become a V12, attracting not only Austria, but also most of the Balkan countries and with a strong interest from the regions of northern Italy. A prescient Orban, after saying in 2016 that Hungary was still fighting for its freedom — only now the threat comes from the EU rather than the Soviet Union — added in 2017 that "27 years ago here in Central Europe we felt that Europe was our future; today we feel that we are the future of Europe."

For the EU, this would be a catastrophe, and hence Hungary and Poland are continuously threatened with sanctions, while these nations accuse Brussels of trying to overthrow sovereign governments through media and foreign non-governmental organizations, in particular those financed by George Soros.

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Hungary's Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Relations, Zoltan Kovacs, wrote: "The billionaire financier (Soros) commands a quasi-mercenary force of at least 2,000 people, tasked with achieving three goals: Bringing down Orban's government, dismantling the border fence, and promoting immigration."

In a speech to the nation made by Orban on March 15 in Budapest, the tone was apocalyptic: "Those who do not halt immigration at their borders are lost: Slowly but surely they are consumed. External forces and international powers want to force all this upon us, with the help of their allies here in our country. And they see our upcoming election as a good opportunity for this.

“National and globalist forces have never squared up to each other so openly... We who believe in nation states, the defense of borders, the family and the value of work are on one side. And opposing us are those who want an open society, a world without borders or nations, new forms of family, devalued work and cheap workers — all ruled over by an army of shadowy and unaccountable bureaucrats. On one side, national and democratic forces and, on the other, supranational and anti-democratic forces.”

The words of an isolated madman? No, because he is one of the very few who has good relations with both Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, and the recent Austrian and Italian elections show that his concerns are shared by the majority of ordinary people.

Are they the words of a racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic man, as many write? No, given his good relations with Israel and the sympathy he has declared toward countries like Morocco and Saudi Arabia. Orban said in 2014 — in his capacity as prime minister: “In the coming decades, the Arab world will play an important role in the global economy.”

So who is Orban? One way to put it is he is simply a national conservative patriot who, from being a skilled and tenacious leader of a small nation, has found himself at the head of a suddenly large and powerful army of “populist” euro rebels. The future of Europe will depend greatly on the outcome of the “battle of Budapest.”

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