

Thoughts on The Decline of the West

BY NORMAN A. BAILEY

A tale of three books.

In 1909, in *The Great Illusion*, British journalist Norman Angell declared that wars among the great powers were no longer possible because the world was so interconnected economically. The book was enormously popular and its author was knighted and given the Nobel Peace Prize. Of course, five years later World War I broke out and raged for four years. Angell died in 1967, long after World War II ended and in the midst of the Cold War—in effect World War III.

After the carnage of World War I, a German philosopher, Oswald Spengler, published *The Decline of the West*, detailing how Western civilization was in the midst of destroying itself. According to Spengler, World War I was, in effect, a civil war within the Western world.

In 1992, after the end of the Cold War, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama proved that history was over, since political democracy and the market economy had definitively triumphed. Fukuyama did better than Angell—the end of history lasted nine years, until three airliners crashed into the twin towers in Manhattan and the Pentagon in northern Virginia. This book was also a great success and made its author wealthy.

It is now almost one hundred years since Oswald Spengler announced the decline of the West, and indeed the West appears to be rapidly declining, and has been doing so since the late 1960s, as witnessed by the decline of:

■ The traditional family: Fewer marriages, fewer children, gender confusion of all shapes and sizes, a declining population.

■ Classical education: Replaced in the humanities and social sciences by ideologically driven propaganda, resulting in generations of self-righteous morons.

■ Civil discourse: Replaced by shouting, foul language, and silencing of those with other ideas.

■ Beauty in art and music: Contemporary art, sculpture, and music are ostentatiously ugly.

■ Respect for history and culture: The smashing of statues by rioters of the extreme left in the United States and Britain in 2020 follows the examples of the destruction of priceless works of art, monuments, and manuscripts in China during the “Cultural Revolution” of 1966–1976, the destruction of the two giant statues of Buddha in Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2001, and the destruction of ancient buildings by ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

■ Journalism: Replaced by misinformation and disinformation.

■ Religious observance: and therefore morality.

■ Respect for law and authority: a huge increase in organized criminal activity and its respectable helpers.

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In addition to all of this, the erstwhile leader of the Western world, the United States, has been spending money like a drunken sailor since the administration of George W. Bush, with endless wars costing hundreds of billions, followed by the equally free-spending Obama administration, and finally the Trump administration that not only continued the spending practices of its predecessors, but was faced with the necessity of spending trillions to try to counteract the economic and social effects of the Covid-19 crisis. The inevitable result of such a mammoth debt burden is the inevitable impoverishment of future generations (the self-righteous morons) through default or inflation.

But these are all symptoms of the decline of the West. There is nothing wrong with treating symptoms as long as you are simultaneously attacking the causes of any disease, physical or social. Otherwise you are simply making the patient somewhat more comfortable while he/she is in the process of dying.

What, then, are the causes of the decline, which has been going on since the late 1960s, with the reactions to the senseless Vietnam War and its aftermaths? I believe there are two principal causes:

In the first place, a grotesque concentration of wealth (defined as income-producing assets) rests with a tiny percent of the population, and relative prosperity is enjoyed by those who work directly for them—managers, lawyers, accountants, and so forth—another 10 percent or so. Ironically, it is the billionaires who in many cases are funding the extremist groups of both the right and the left. However, there are many ways in which this cause of increasing social anomie and political populism can be addressed, through cooperatives, employee stock-ownership plans, community investment trusts, and the like. The nine million or so American workers who own their companies and the Alaskan native corporations are examples of what can be done. But where are the popular or political leaders working to make this happen?

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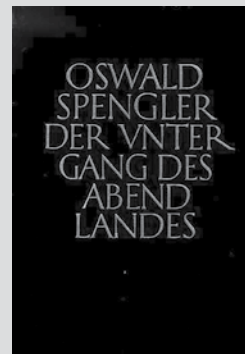
The other significant cause, in my opinion, is modern technology, leading to unemployment, hatred of immigrants, and downward class mobility, all leading to masses of enraged people ready to support populist leaders and movements and join violent mobs in orgies

Three Books on the Future of Western Civilization

British journalist **Norman Angell** received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1933. His best-selling 1909 book, **The Great Illusion**, argued that wars among the great powers were no longer possible because the world was so interconnected economically.



German philosopher **Oswald Spengler** published **The Decline of the West** in 1922, detailing how Western civilization was in the midst of destroying itself.



In his 1992 book **The End Of History And The Last Man**, American political scientist **Francis Fukuyama** proved that history was over, since political democracy and the market economy had definitively triumphed.



of destruction, all enhanced by social manipulation also made possible by hi-tech. Again, the massive educational effort necessary to equip the people at large to deal with modern technology is conspicuously missing.

If these causes of the decline of the West are not addressed, the decline will continue until Western civilization is relegated to the annals of history and the new era of political authoritarianism and state capitalism takes over—all with a Chinese accent. ◆